



THE LEX LUGAR LEGEND GROWS!

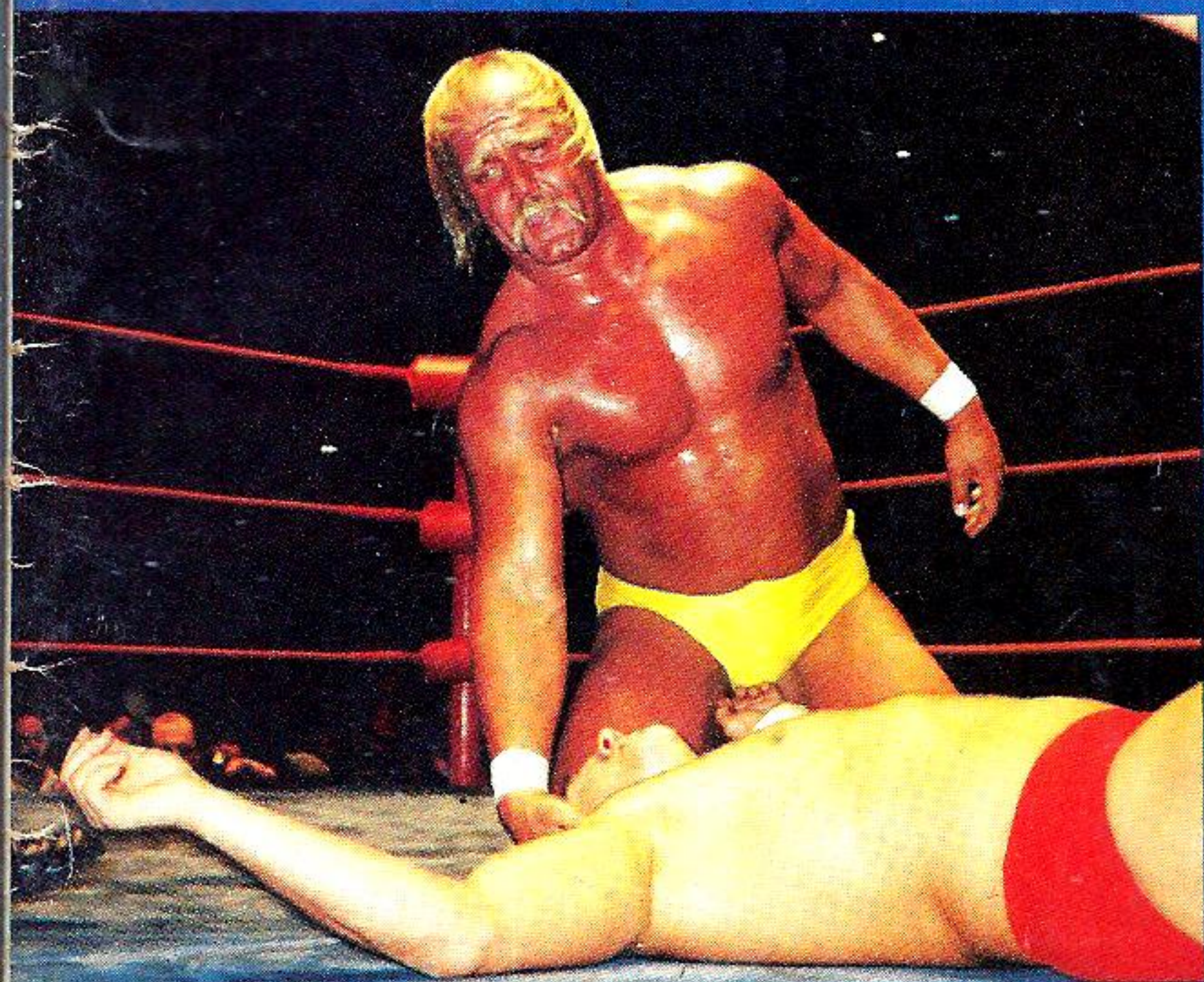
June 1986

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THE **Wrestler**

Hulk Hogan's Route To Roddy Piper:

DISCARD THE ACE TO GET TO THE JOKER!



Kerry Reveals His Secret:

**"I'VE TOLD MAGNUM T.A.
HOW TO BEAT RIC FLAIR!"**

**Ric Flair vs.
Nick Bockwinkel:**

**FOUR YEARS
TOO LATE...
BUT STILL
GREAT!**

**GINO HERNANDEZ—
A CAREER
RETROSPECTIVE**



Wrestler^{THE}

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YOUR LETTERS

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TWO TRIBUTES TO GINO

It is with great sadness that I heard today that Gino Hernandez recently died.

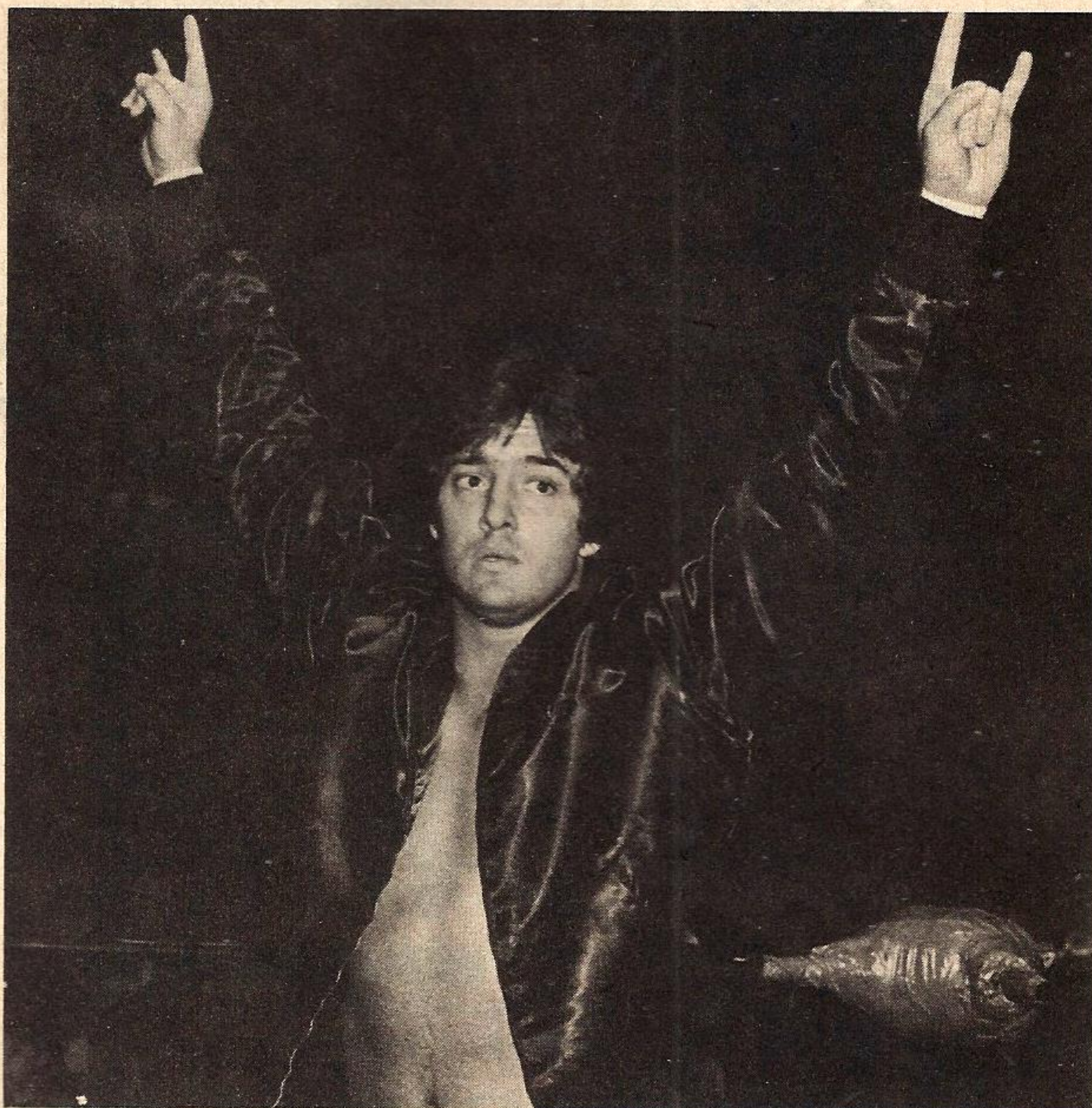
While most hated his wrestling tactics, Gino was my favorite. Always unique and a refreshing change from

the constant Von Erich dominance of World Class wrestling, Gino always gave his best and was always entertaining. I still have the June 1977 issue of *The Wrestler* where Gino's debut in New York at age 19 prompted your article, "The Night A Kid Set

The Garden On Fire," the start of his brilliant career.

I'll miss Gino. And what he always shouted was true—"He was our champion!"

ANDY HERSHAL
Green Bay, WI



While he was among the most hated men in wrestling, Gino Hernandez will be sorely missed by the wrestling community, which, for the most part, recognized his talents and style.

I cannot believe the tragedy that has occurred in World Class wrestling.

First the Dynamic Duo splits up because of a misunderstanding. Then Chris Adams loses his eyesight from the substance Gino Hernandez threw in his eyes. But the worst tragedy of all is the sudden death of the "Handsome Half-Breed," Gino Hernandez.

The Dynamic Duo was the best tag team the state of Texas has ever seen. Even though the Von Erichs tried to humiliate them by shaving their heads, Gorgeous Gino and Gentleman Chris still recaptured their tag team titles.

Chris and Gino were a first-class team. Even without their hair, they were still bad to the bone. I know a lot of people did not like their style of wrestling, but they were exciting to watch both in and out of the ring. I hope Chris recovers and is able to return to the greatest sport in the world.

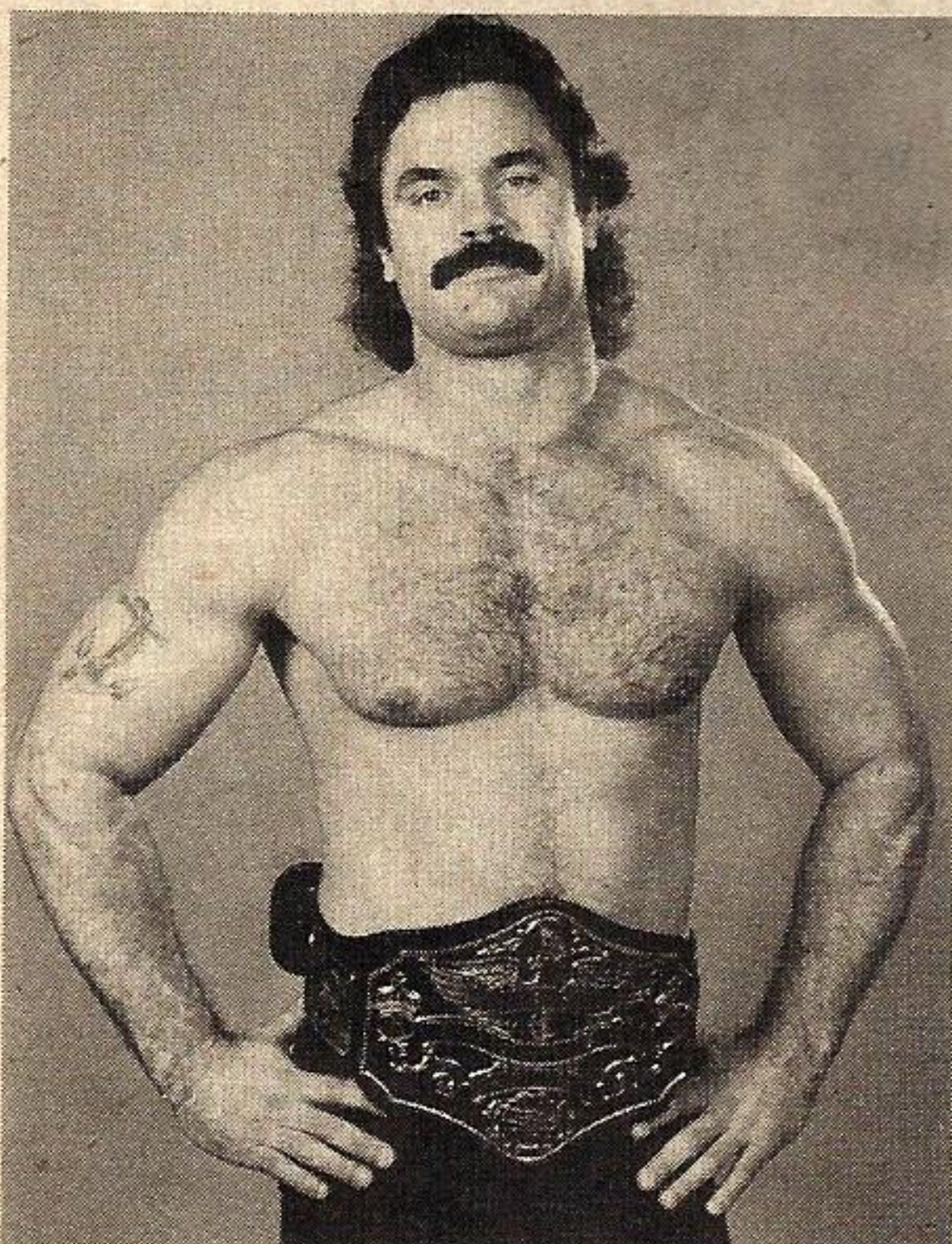
And Gino—I will remember you
(Continued on page 48)

WHAT'S HAPPENING!

By BILL APTER

THE ANNOUNCEMENT HAS shocked the wrestling world in its suddenness and finality. On February 20, the World Class officially seceded from the National Wrestling Alliance, claiming the disqualification rule—the rule whereby a champion retains his title if he is disqualified or counted out—was destroying the sport.

"**Ric Flair** would come down to Texas," explained official **Ken Mantell**, "and get thrashed by the **Von Erich** boys, but in each case



With the World Class' withdrawal from the NWA, Rick Rude will become the number one target of Texas wrestlers.

he would disqualify himself and retain his title. That's improper conduct for the World champion and an impropriety we at World Class could no longer accept. It got to a point where we could no longer associate ourselves with the NWA.

"We will still recognize Flair as a World champion, on the same level as **Rick Rude**, who now becomes the World Class Wrestling Association champion. Titles will change on disqualifications and countouts. This will be an association of action and movement. A champion will have to battle like heck to retain his title."

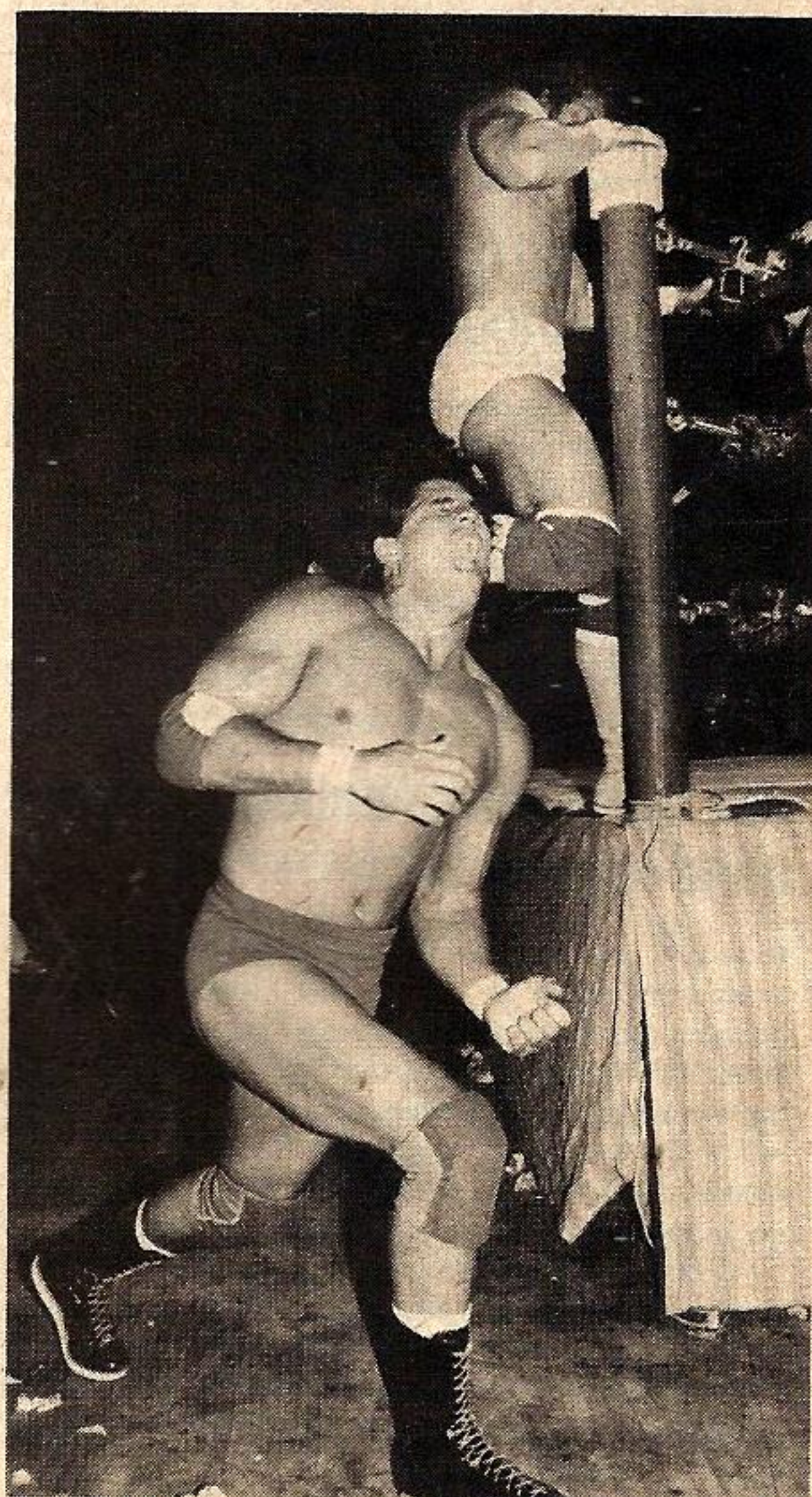
NWA President **Bob Geigel** was surprised but not outraged at the decision. "For years the World Class has tried to change the disqualification rule. They put it on the agenda at every NWA convention. Their solution, though, will cause chaos. There will be a new champion every night."

(The pros and cons of the disqualification rule are discussed in detail in *Wrestling 86's* Summer 1986 "You Decide" column.)

According to Geigel, World Class wrestlers will still be eligible for NWA title shots. Such matches

will be sanctioned by the NWA and wrestled under the prevailing rules.

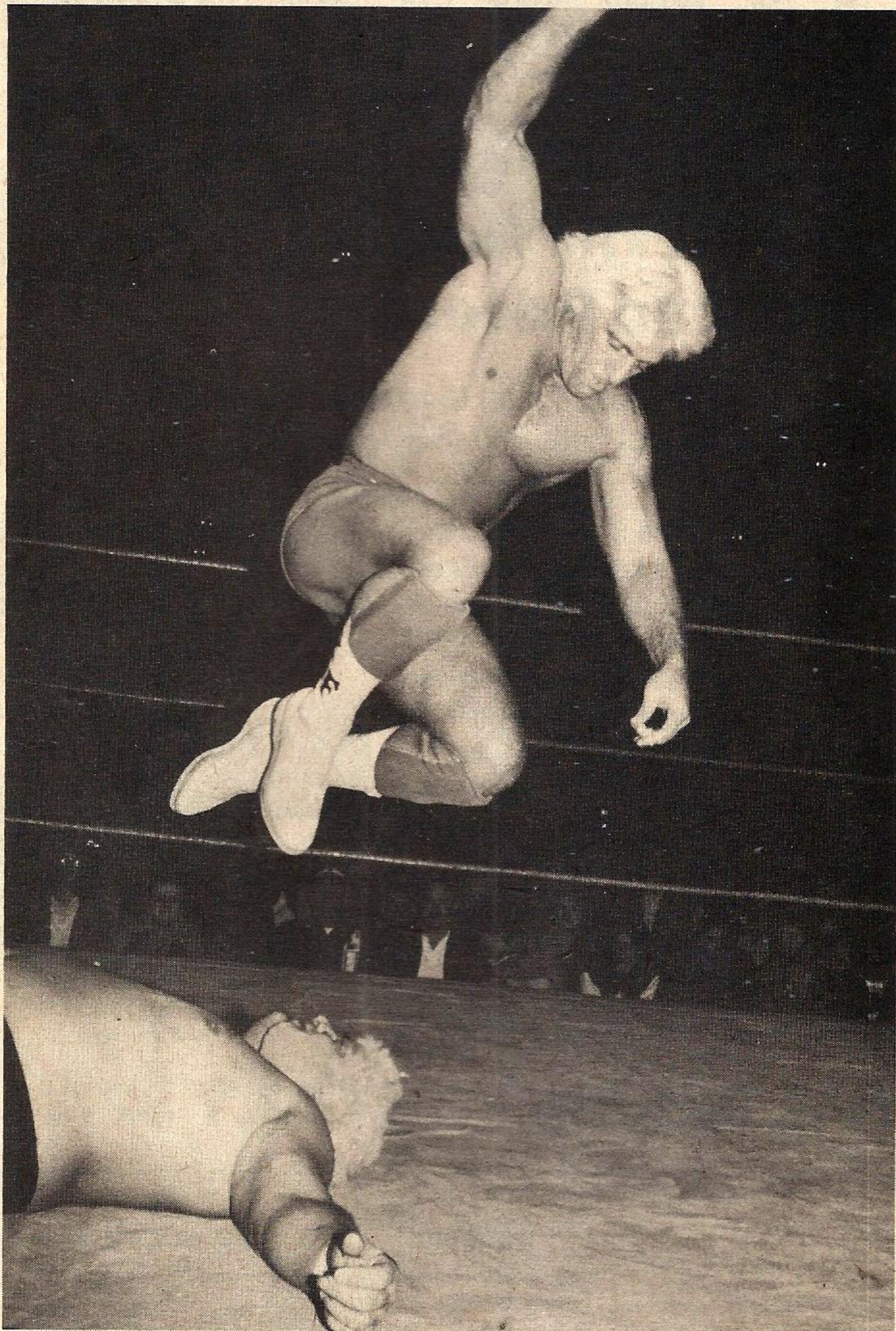
Did **Randy Savage** use a foreign object to defeat **Tito Santana** and win the WWF Intercontinental (Continued on page 54)



Randy Savage kicks Tito Santana in the back of the neck. The "Macho Man" took Santana's Intercontinental title with the aid of a foreign object.

CORRESPONDENTS

REPORTS



Ric Flair drops in on Dusty Rhodes in another of their many controversial matches. If Dusty walks away from this feud without the NWA belt, he'll have to be considered the unluckiest wrestler alive!

Hamilton, Ontario (Correspondent—Geoff Stewart): NWA World champion Ric Flair was warmly welcomed by a sellout crowd of 12,000 as the main event for the first Mosca-Mania spectacular, promoted by Angelo Mosca, was underway. Flair's opponent: "The American Dream," Dusty Rhodes.

As the match started, it was Dusty who had the upper hand. He used his valet Baby Doll to the fullest advantage, distracting the referee while she brutally slapped Flair's face. Midway through the match, Dusty slipped on the figure-four leglock, but Flair got out of it by reaching to the ropes. Finally, distracted by the referee, Dusty was caught with a shot to the back of the head and pinned.

In other bouts: The Road Warriors beat Baron Von Raschke & Nikita Koloff . . . The match between Abdullah the Butcher and Jimmy Valiant was stopped due to excessive bleeding by both men . . . Sgt. Slaughter mauled Bullwhip Johnston . . . Angelo Mosca Jr. and Vic Rossetani battled to a double-disqualification against The Kelly Twins . . . Little Farmer Pete pinned Frenchy Lamar . . . Joey War Eagle beat Jess Star.

San Jose, CA (Correspondent—Jeremy Petroff): In the second main event of a card sponsored
(Continued on page 56)

If you would like your area of the country represented in these reports, while also being officially credited with your own by-line, send us reports of the matches you attend. You will have the thrill of seeing your name in an internationally known magazine while at the same time helping to improve the quality of wrestling in your area.

So why not give it a try? You will be glad you did!

Send your reports to:

CORRESPONDENTS EDITOR, BOX 48, ROCKVILLE CENTRE, NY 11571

Q: "I have something I'd like to ask Road Warrior Animal: I like the new outfits you guys are wearing, but why do you keep changing your makeup all the time? Now, Animal, you're adding these eye-lash-type lines under your eyes. It looks stupid, and takes away from the rest of your look."—Roger Jenkins, Chicago

A: "Hey! Roger Jenkins!" Animal replied. "You're a pretty brave little punk to call *me* stupid when you're writing a letter in the mail. You don't like the makeup? I don't care! And I see by your letter you live in Chicago. That's me and brother Hawk's home town. Maybe we'll look you up next time we're back, and we'll see how stupid *you* look, you little jerk."

Q: "My question is for Tully Blanchard: Are you jealous now that Baby Doll is with Dusty Rhodes?"—Linda Cochran, St. Louis



Publicly, Tully Blanchard will not admit that he misses having Baby Doll by his side. He says that she and Dusty Rhodes belong together and that he would not take her back under any circumstances.

YOU ASKED US

Here's the monthly feature which YOU get to write! It's your chance to have a top wrestler answer YOUR questions!

Only the best questions will be answered—so put on your thinking caps and come up with some good ones! Address your questions—and who you would like to have answer them—to: **YOU ASKED US, c/o THE WRESTLER, PO Box 48, Rockville Centre, N.Y. 11571.** Questions will be answered only in this column and at our discretion.

A: Tully Blanchard's reply was characterized by amazement: "Jealous? Are you kidding? Jealous of that shapeless blob of fat and cellulite? You've got to be kidding. Frankly, I wouldn't take Baby Doll back if she came to me on her hands and knees and begged all night long. Have you seen what's happened to her since she joined with Dusty? I think the two of them go to all-you-can-eat nights together—she must have gained at least 50 pounds. I'll tell you, that's the difference between me and Dusty: I wouldn't have allowed that when she was with me. But then, my standards are far higher than Dusty's, that's obvious. Jealous? Never. Well, on second thought, maybe a little, because I think Baby Doll could probably do something now that I can't—the big splash maneuver. *Hahaha!*"

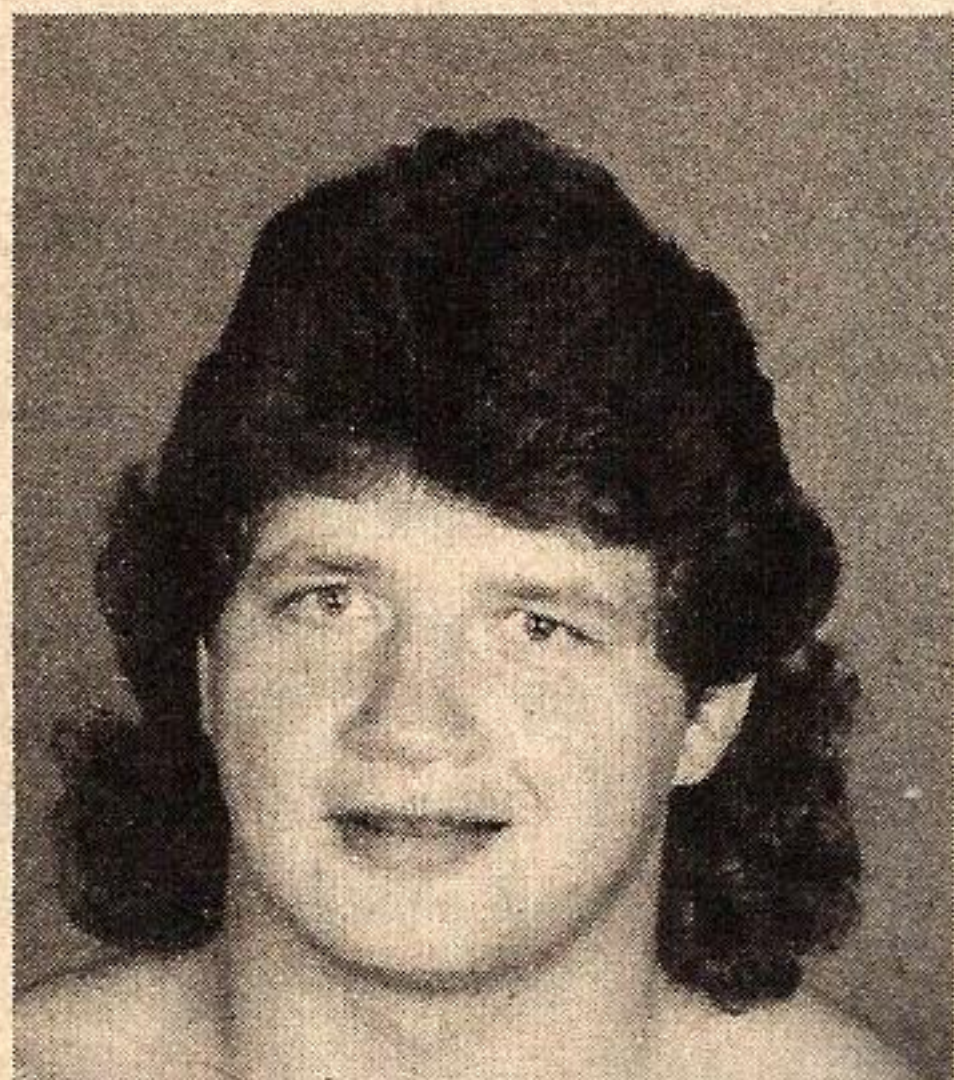
Q: "My question is for Capt. Lou Albano: I would have thought that The British Bulldogs would have won the WWF tag team title from Greg Valentine and Brutus Beefcake by now. Are you considering this title attempt a failure? I'm really surprised that they haven't won the belts yet, especially since I've seen them wrestle Valentine and Beefcake several times, and they did very well against them."—Mike Castle, New York

A: "No, I don't consider this a failure," Albano said. "This is not a failure, because it's impending, it's happening, it's going to happen, the Bulldogs are right on the verge of capturing the belts, Valentine and Beefcake are ready to fall, they're ready to collapse, and the Bulldogs are right in there, they're wrestling better than ever, they're coming up with new moves and new maneuvers daily, and the belts *will* belong to them in a matter of a very, very, very short time."

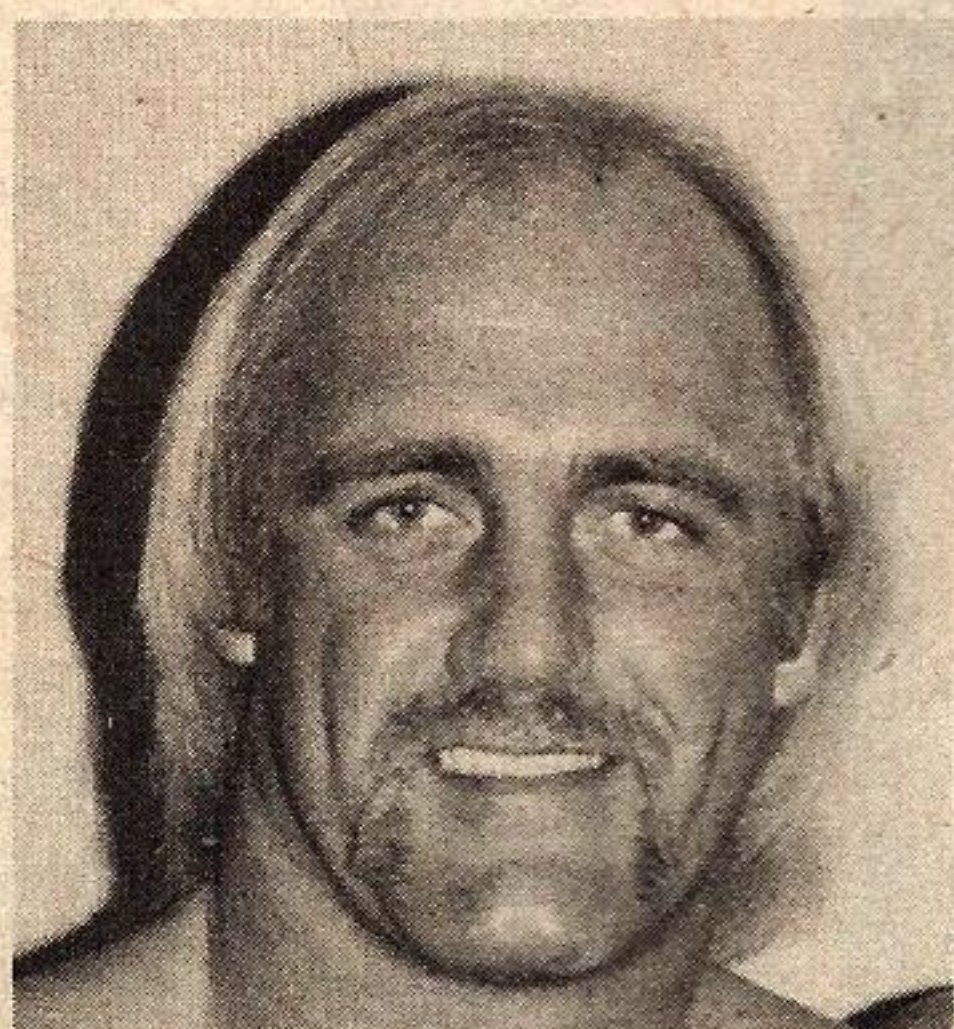
Q: "I was shocked to hear about the death of Gino Hernandez, and I
(Continued on page 58)

Thumbs Up

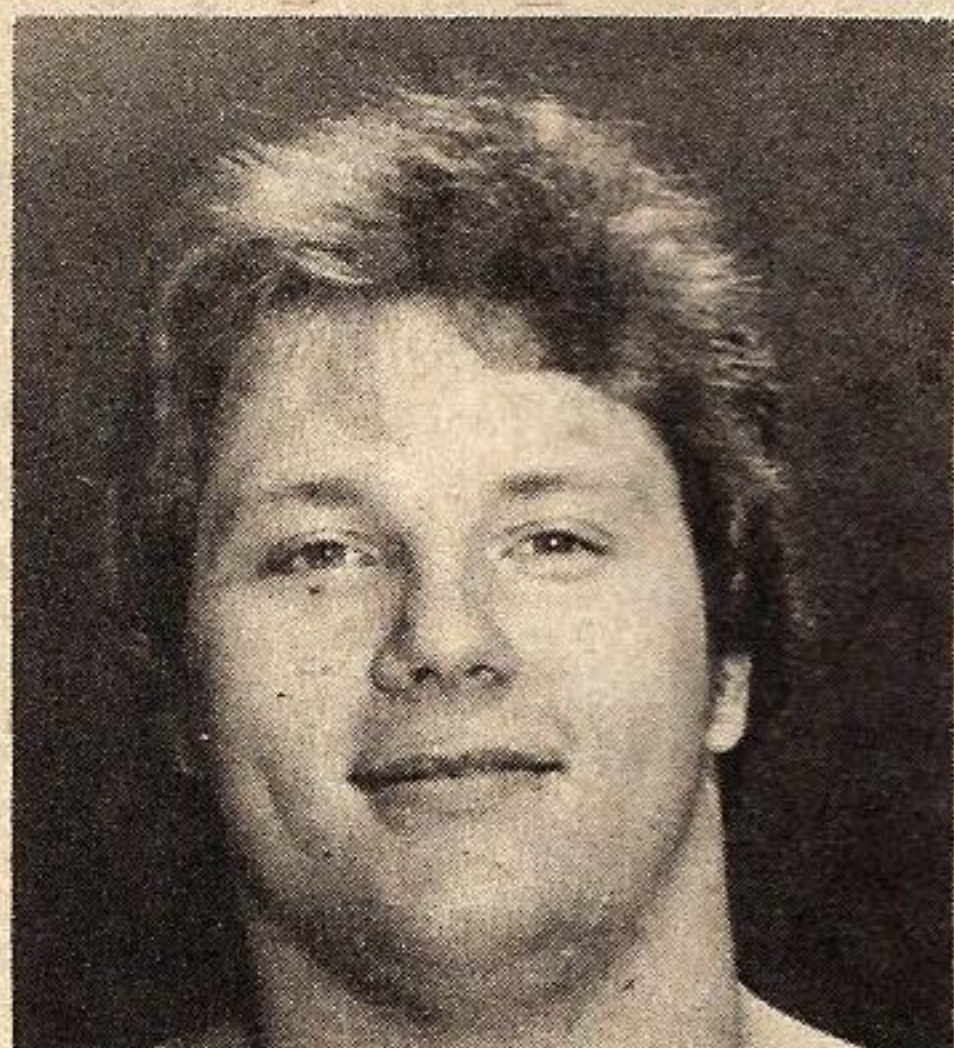
Each issue, *The Wrestler* will praise the noteworthy and damn those who violate the honor of wrestling. The praiseworthy receive a Thumbs Up, the disgraceful are marked with a Thumbs Down. Here is this month's roll of honor and shame.



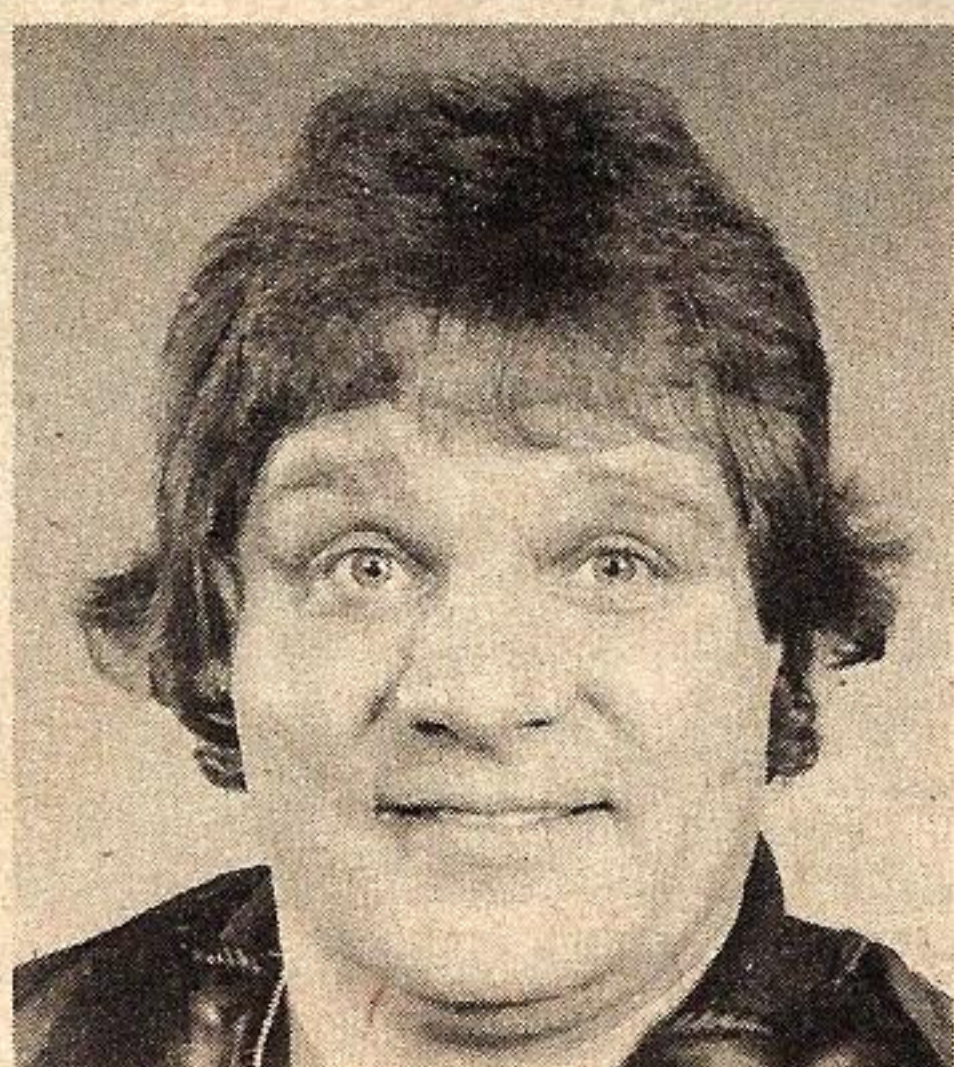
Thumbs Up to Jesse Barr: The former Greco-Roman star has always hidden his scientific skill behind a slimy veneer of arrogance and cheating. Returning to Florida after a brief absence, Mr. Barr has surprised the fans there with a clean, rule-abiding ring philosophy. It is indeed a pleasure to watch a gifted young star take such a courageous step, and we are sure that the change will benefit his career in the long run.



Thumbs Up to Hulk Hogan: The most popular man in wrestling today has lately shown remarkable courage and tenacity in defending his belt. In the face of his most grueling series of title defenses (against Randy Savage) and injuries stemming from vicious illegal attacks (by King Kong Bundy and Magnificent Muraco), Mr. Hogan has persevered. The pundits who have been predicting the end of his title reign—including members of *The Wrestler's* own staff—may have underestimated just how tough and durable the WWF World champion is.

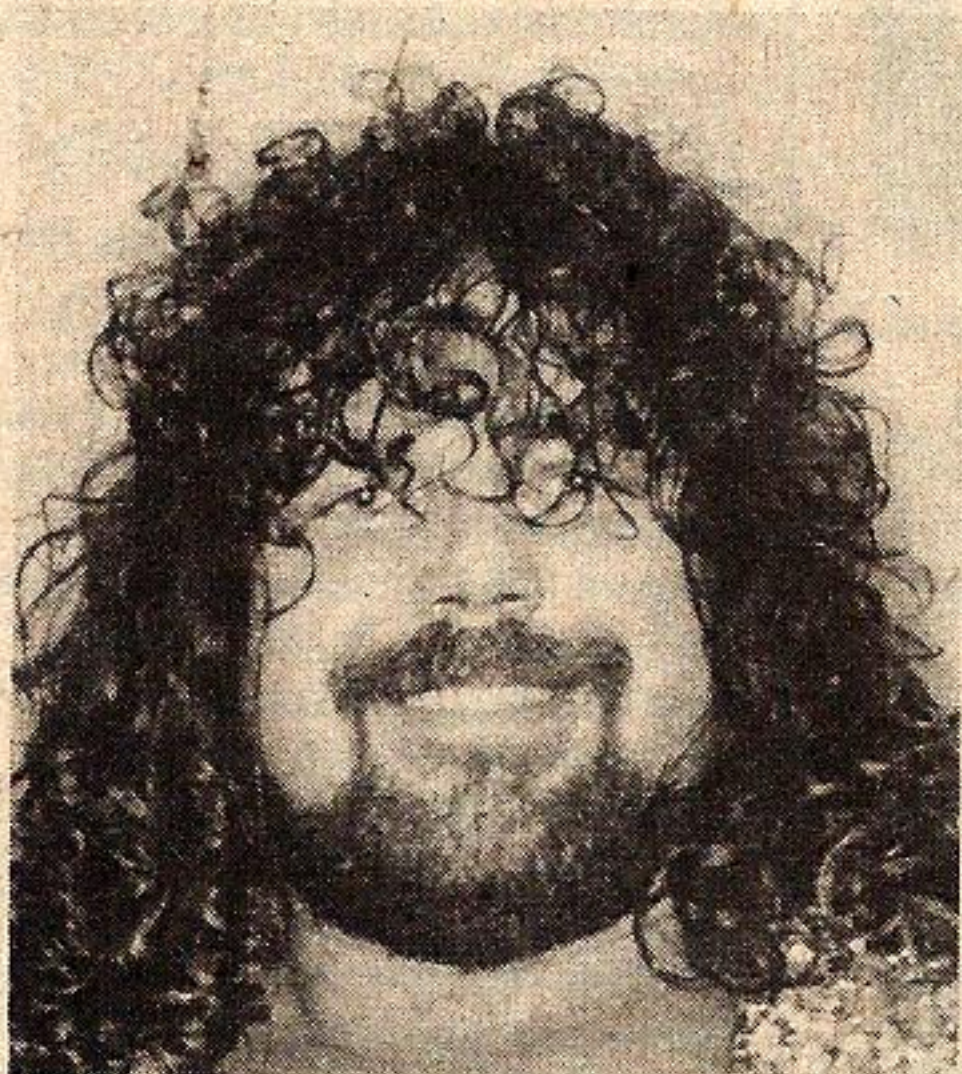


Thumbs Up to David Sammartino: Leaving the WWF and moving on to the AWA was a logical and necessary step in leaving his illustrious father's shadow for good. That is, it *should* be; or will David Sammartino get glued in a messy, pointless feud with family nemesis Larry Zbyszko? If he is still fighting his dad's old wars, he would be better off facing AWA World champion Stan Hansen, who broke the senior Sammartino's neck a decade ago. Vengeance would be sweeter with a world title to show for it.

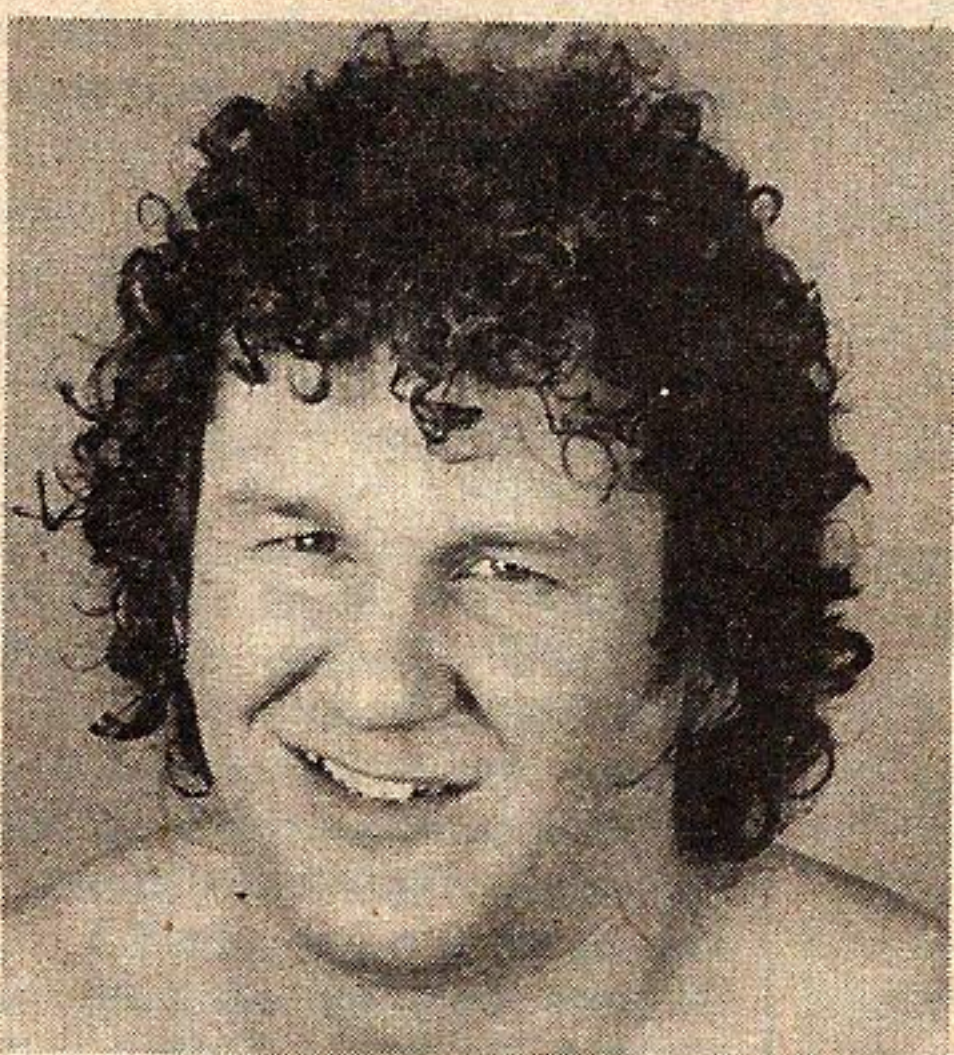


Thumbs Up to Dick Slater: A curious incident in one of Mr. Slater's recent matches with Jake Roberts forces one to wonder whether he will once again wrestle by the rules. His valet, Dark Journey, handed him a length of chain, but he tucked into his waistband without using it. Any hint that Dirty Dick has a speck of decency in his black heart should be applauded. We doubt that Slater merely forgot about his secret weapon, since he had numerous opportunities to use it and win the match. Is Mr. Unpredictable returning to the scientific fold?

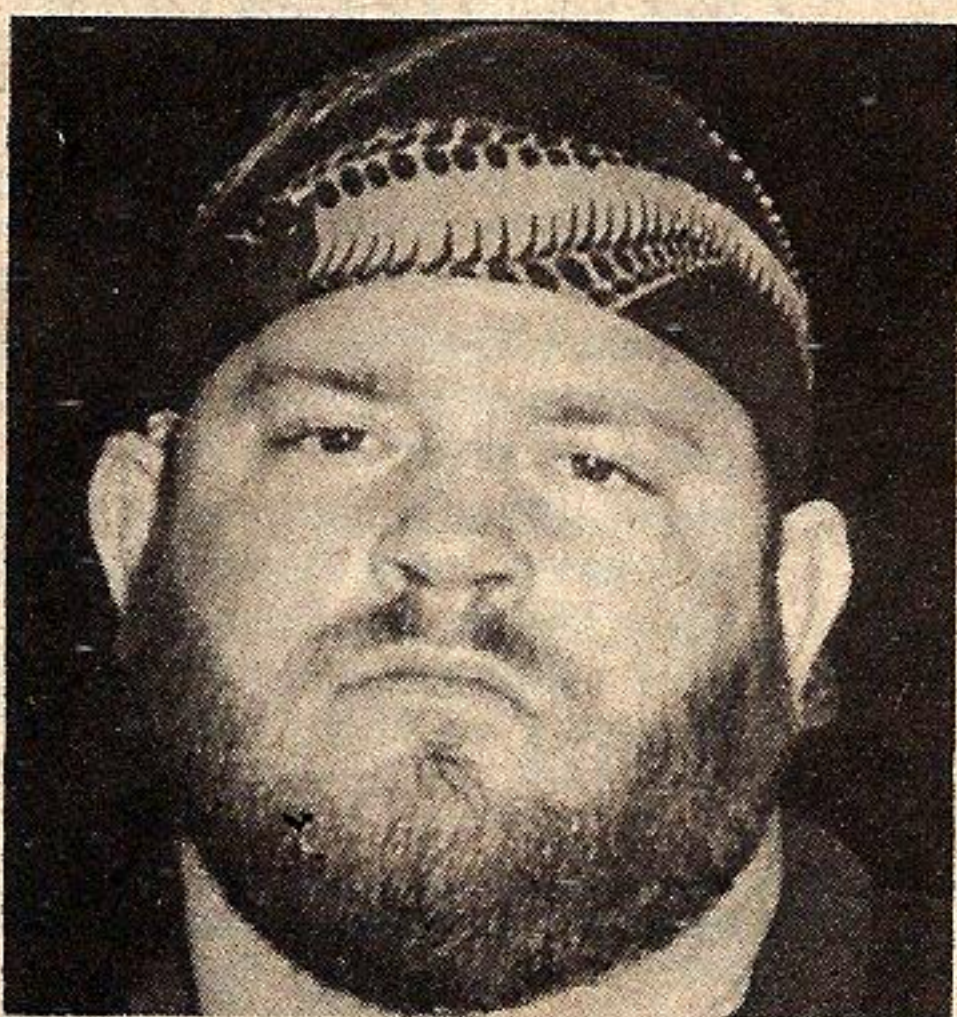
Thumbs Down



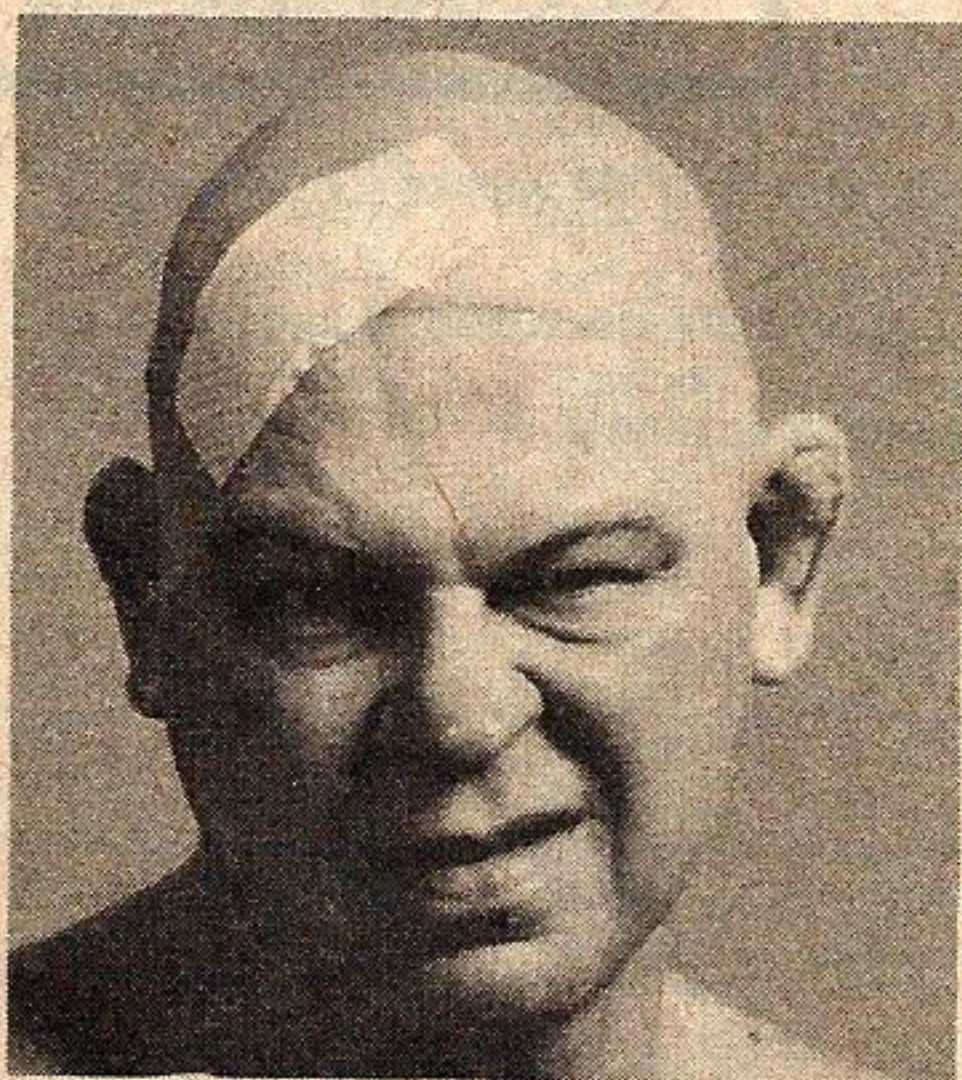
Thumbs Down to Jim Garvin: The reunion of brothers Jim and Ronnie Garvin in the World Championship region is anything but auspicious. When the siblings appeared in Montreal for a one-shot tag teaming last year, they broke every rule in the book and some that weren't. It wouldn't be beneath Jim Garvin to use his emotional family ties to try and coerce Ronnie into more rulebreaking. He did, after all, manage Ronnie and brother Terry in the 1970s, when they behaved like criminally psychotic animals in the ring.



Thumbs Down to Cowboy Bob Orton: Mr. Orton's foray into boxing is both ridiculous and downright offensive. We would not object if he had a decent amateur boxing background, but his glove work indicates that he either hasn't boxed before or he forgot everything he learned. To see him clumsily flailing away against the likes of Mr. T and preliminary wrestler Jose Luis Rivera is to know that he besmirches the honor of the great sport of boxing as much as wrestling. Mr. Orton fights like a little girl and shouldn't be allowed near the gloves until he proves otherwise.

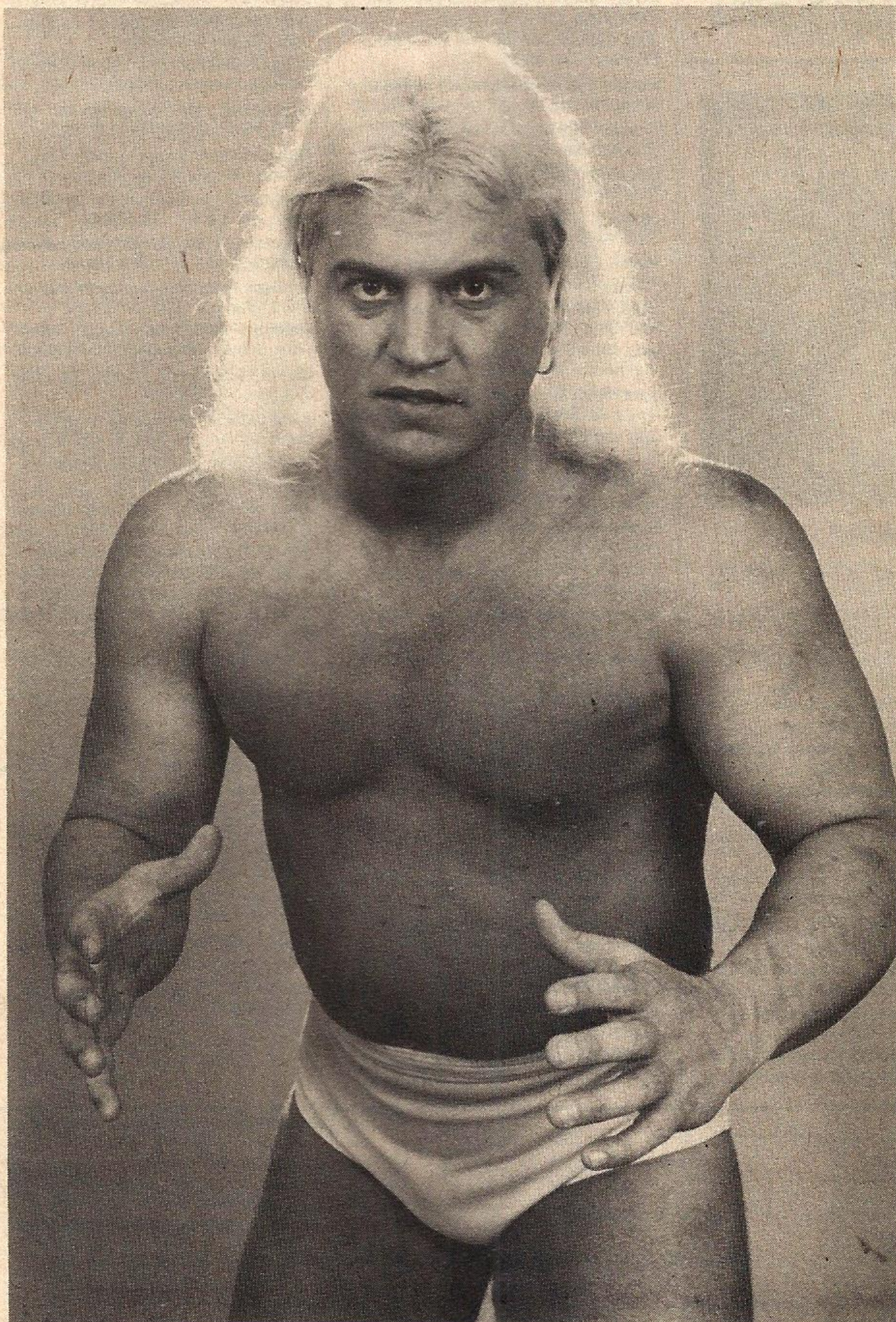


Thumbs Down to Buzz Sawyer: Unlike the Garvins' situation, here is a case where a sibling reunion would be welcomed. Mr. Sawyer shows no signs of relaxing his bloodlust in the Mid-South. It may be that the only way he can comfort himself in a civilized manner is when he is teaming up with brother Brett, who has just entered the area. So far, however, there is no indication that they are on speaking terms. Buzz Sawyer is a troubled young man who needs help from *somebody*. Otherwise, he may eventually cripple some fan favorite in a crazed, homicidal rage.



Thumbs Down to Baron Von Raschke: Herr Raschke's new allegiance with Ivan and Nikita Koloff is one of the most shocking and saddening wrestling stories in recent memory. Actually, it goes beyond wrestling and into the dark side of world politics, as any story does that involves the Koloffs. Sure, fan favorites degenerate into rulebreakers every week. But it is almost inconceivable to see it happen to a veteran who has fought so many valiant struggles in recent years. We can only irrationally hope that Raschke is working as a double-agent. □

INTRODUCING MIKE GOLDEN



Mike Golden is an arrogant young wrestler who more often than not backs up his boasts with victories.

IT WAS ONLY as far back as the Carter Administration that a strapping young prospect named Sterling Golden took Georgia fans by storm. Sterling Golden passed through a few stormy changes before he arrived at the moniker Hulk Hogan. The rest, of course, is still making history.

Now, there is another Golden who wishes to rule the wrestling roost—no relation to the WWF kingpin. Mike Golden himself would be offended by comparisons. “Who cares about Hogan? He’s too ugly to be called champion. Only attractive men and women should be allowed in the ring. Ugly wrestlers should be banned.”

Mike Golden isn’t afraid to say what he feels. But if *arrogant* wrestlers were banned, *The Wrestler* would go out of business in a big fat hurry.

Mike Golden grew up in Oklahoma City. He carved himself a local legend as a high school quarterback, and 37 colleges waved football scholarships in his sneering face before he chose Southeastern Oklahoma State in Durant. (“Barry Switzer and the creeps at U. of Oklahoma are a little too cheap for a young man of my talent and dignity,” he was reported as saying at the time.) Golden wound up devoting less and less time to football practice and more to sitting at ringside for the local wrestling matches, taking eager notes on all his favorites and dreaming of ring stardom.

His big break came when he was befriended by Buddy Roberts, veteran
(Continued on page 20)

Strutting pretty boys with big mouths and sassy valets seem to be a dime a dozen in wrestling. In Texas, a talented young man-mountain is out to prove he’s the best of the bleached-blond breed

INTRODUCING

(Continued from page 18)



Golden forces Big Bubba's neck into the ropes. Mike rarely allows the rulebook to stand in the way of what he wants to accomplish.

of the original Hollywood Blonds and best-known as a member of The Fabulous Freebirds. Buddy Jack encouraged Golden to attend wrestling school, and introduced him to 'Bird brothers Terry Gordy and Michael Hayes. The Freebirds arranged his debut in Florida, and he compiled a record well above .500 over his eight-month stay.

Golden then moved to Texas' new All-Star promotion, where he has really come into his own. He established himself as one of the most promising contenders in the area, rampaging over his opposition with an aggressive, no-nonsense style. Fans were also appalled by Golden's pretty-boy strutting and his penchant for cheat pinfalls and other forms of rulebreaking. The Freebirds' lessons in unsavory tactics have lasted and worked successfully for Golden.

If that didn't dismay Texas fans enough, Golden soon hired a manager/valet and dubbed her Fantasy. "One look at her at and you'll know why I call her Fantasy," Golden cackled. Most fans are dubious about whether she is as va-va-va-voomworthy as Missy Hyatt or even Sunshine, but

they have no doubt about her influence. Her function in Golden's career goes far beyond wolf whistles and interference. She is more akin to Randy Savage's Miss Elizabeth, working as a hard-driving business manager, but un-



Golden is led to the ring by his valet-manager, Fantasy. "We are the classiest act in wrestling," he says.

like Elizabeth she is also rumored to have a strong input in the formulation of Golden's wrestling strategies.

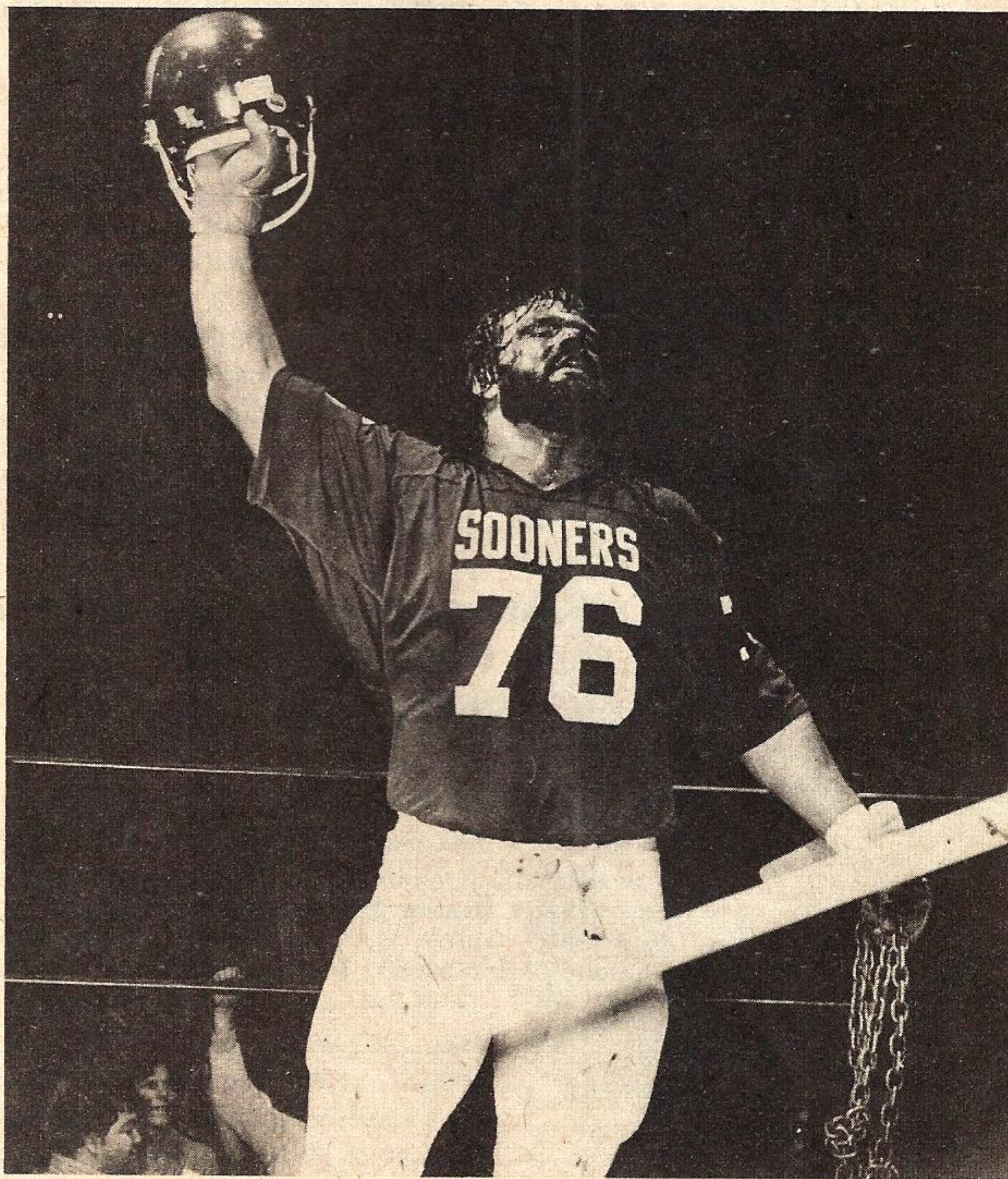
If arrogance was an armlock, Golden would have left a trail of dislocated shoulders east of the Rio Grande by now. Operating in the noble (or ignoble) tradition of men like Ric Flair, Austin Idol, and Playboy Buddy Rose, among many others, Mike Golden is firmly convinced that flashy good looks and platinum locks are crucial to his success. "It works every time, if a kid like that has the talent to back it up," remarked a veteran Texas official. "The other wrestlers underestimate his power and intestinal fortitude because he acts so self-absorbed and overly conscious of his appearance. It's usually a psychological ploy, and it usually works. Golden's opponents are lulled into a false sense of security, thinking they're fighting a narcissistic wimp. More often than not, they wind up flat on their backs, staring up at Golden after they've fallen for a three-count."

"We are the classiest act in wrestling," Golden smirks. "Fantasy and I are the utmost in human perfection. I mean really, dudes, have you ever seen a cuter couple?" Golden's rhetorical question is met by fans and opponents alike with resounding raspberries. But Golden is an undeniable talent. Other wrestlers who have denigrated him as no more than a loudmouth braggart have paid for it with pinfalls. The kid's not as pretty as he looks—that is, he knows how to win ugly.

And what are the Golden One's future goals? "First, I want to squash that roly-poly retard Big Bubba. I don't know why the fans love him so much. The fat slob hasn't seen his kneecaps in 10 years. He's a disgrace to the sport. Then, it's straight on to Flair. He thinks he's prettier and classier than I am. I'll take a no-disqualification match with him, so he can't run away or toss me over the top rope, and kick bloody dents into his skull. I am the greatest wrestler in the world. Fantasy is the greatest manager in the world. Why can't you people out there accept the truth?" □

Q & A

Each month, *The Wrestler* will present a "Question and Answer" forum with an important figure in the wrestling world. It is your chance to meet wrestling's biggest stars as they answer the questions uppermost in the fans' minds



Q: The cheers, Steve Williams. All these clapping hands and screaming tributes. What gives?

A: Heh, heh. It's something else isn't it? After 25 years of antagonism, of boos and hisses, it's something.

Q: What? What is it?

A: Heh, heh, heh. I don't know. I have to give it some time. You ask yourself, what's it all about? I'm doing the same things now—stomping heads the same way as I've always done. What's the difference? Who gives a damn anyway?

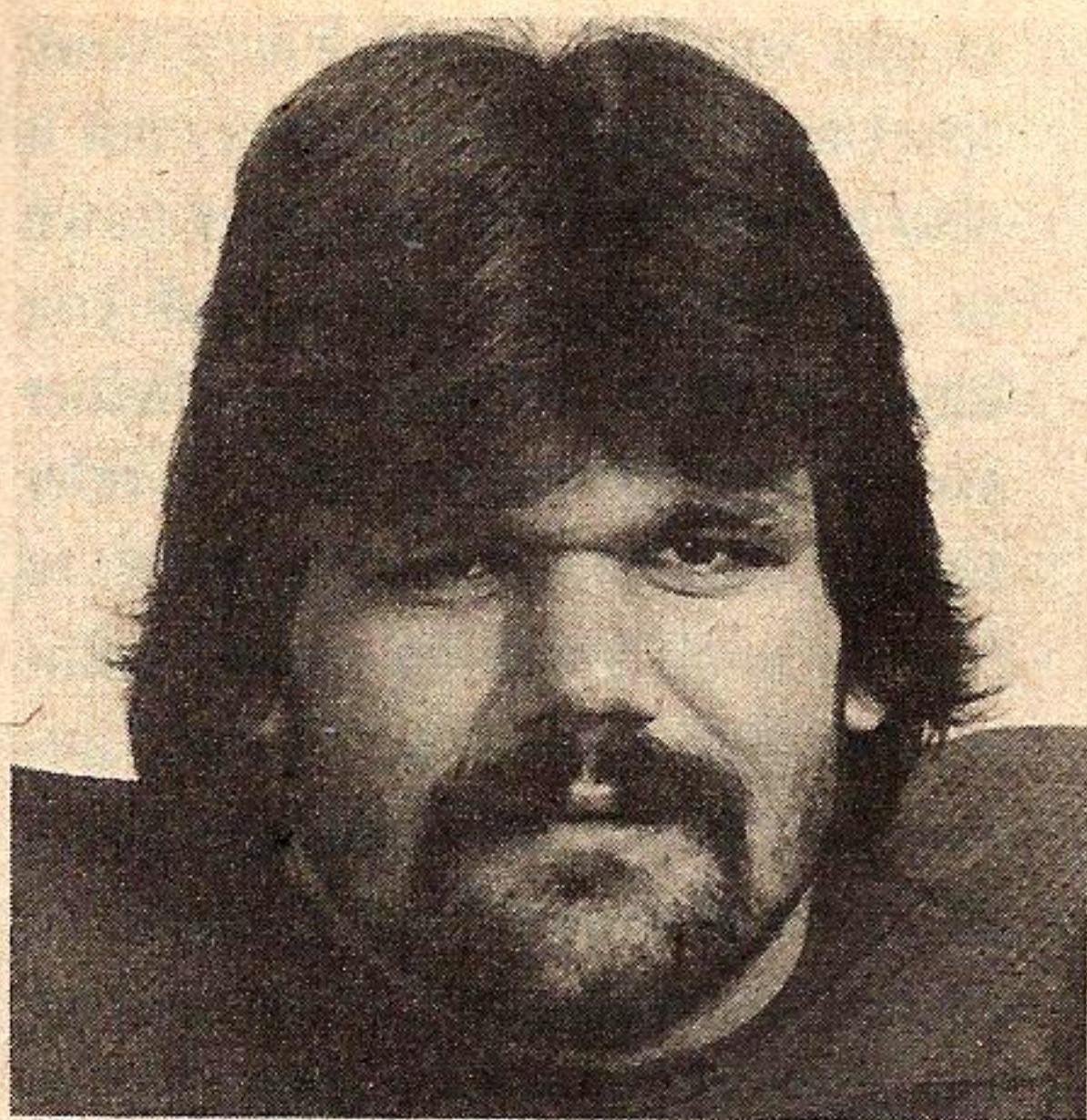
Q: Did you ever want to be a hero?

A: No, sir. I am what reporters have always liked referring to as an anti-hero. I always attracted the wrong kind of attention. My picture was always in the other locker room. In high school, in every town I'd wrestle in, the fans would scream during my match. And I liked it that way. I responded to their taunts. It gave me incentive not only to win, but to leave an impression. I discovered the best impressions are those requiring casts.

Q: Has all that changed since the fans stopped hissing and started cheering?

A: Of course not. I know of only one way to wrestle. My tactics won't change now that I'm tangling with the Masked Superstars. If anything, wrestling more so-called rule-breakers allows me the space to open up. I'm really ready for combat now.

STEVE WILLIAMS

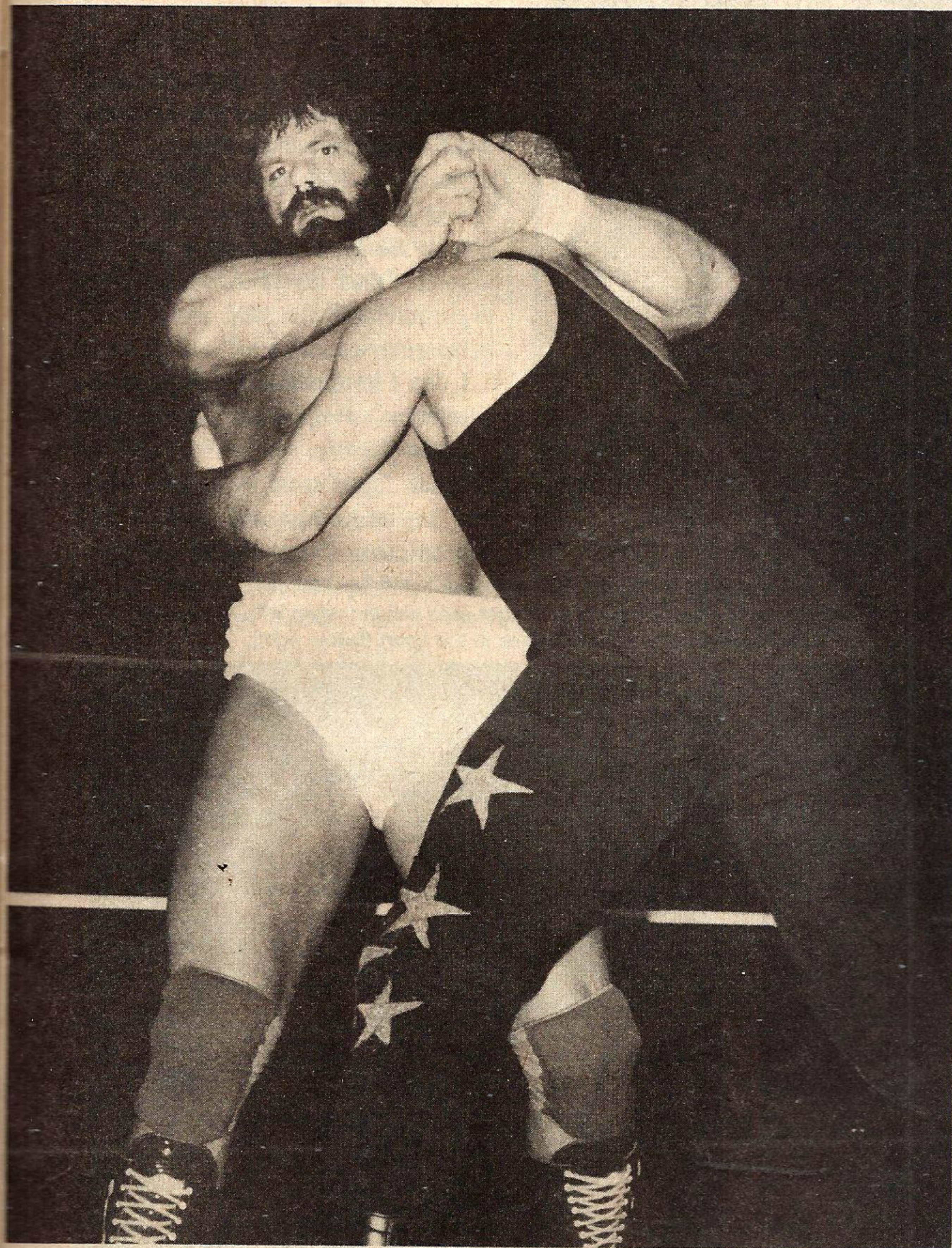


DON'T CRY OVER Steve Williams. All the standing ovations in the world, lined end to end, could not subvert the born hell-raiser in Steve "Dr. Death" Williams.

Being saluted as an American hero, lauded by the public, and given the keys to several cities has lent a surreal, practically unbelievable quality to the man. This, after all, is an individual who earned his homicidal nickname in junior high school.

But the point to be made here, surely, is that you don't lose your license to stomp or your ability to maim simply because the fans decide your name merits applause.

That's exactly the point Steve Williams makes in this interview with Assistant Editor Eddie Ellner. Williams and his Mid-Southern tag team championship partner and another former rulebreaker, Ted DiBiase, now find themselves sharing the same dining rooms with such sworn enemies as Terry Taylor and Hacksaw Duggan. Big deal? Not according to Williams, whose impassive acceptance of circumstance is remarkable for a professional wrestler. Here he explains his origins and beliefs, and his concept of football as the only universal truth.



As he wrestles such men as Masked Superstar II, Steve Williams has received the support of Mid-South fans. As a man who has always been inspired by the taunts of the fans, this could be a tough transition.

Q: Is there a specific thing you attribute the turnaround to?

A: As far as I can tell, a couple things have contributed to this new image of mine. First was winning *Pro Wrestling Illustrated's* Most Improved Wrestler of the Year award. Lots of people figure if I could win a *PWI*-sanctioned award, besides most hated, then I can't be all bad. The second was the coverage I received when I helped some people out of a burning car. The national press picked up on that and portrayed me as some kind of hero—which I wasn't—I just did what anybody would have done. The third thing was just hanging around DiBiase. Ever since his neck injury, the guy's been more popular than Bill Cosby.

Q: Injuries provoke sympathy. After you received 108 stitches in your eye, how many letters did you get?

A: Too many. You'd think I'd received Holy Communion with the Pope. People were really concerned. Did they know I wrestled that night?

Q: I think so. We ran a number of stories about the injury, and I'm sure that had a lot to do with your *PWI* award. Still, it was a remarkable achievement to the fans, even if it wasn't much to you. Lots of people call in sick with a hangnail.

A: It comes with the territory. I'm a wrestler. I'm supposed to be immune to pain. And you know something? I believe I am.

Q: What inspires you in the ring? What kind of mental conditioning allows you to play through the pain and injuries you encounter?

A: All the wrestling awards, the big

salary, fancy cars, suburban home, I owe it all to football. Football gave me the education I needed to be successful in this life. At the University of Oklahoma, I was

taught survival. Football is a team sport and breeds dependence, but it also breeds survival. It comes down to an individual struggle and you have 10 men relying on whether you can perform or not. Under those circumstances you learn to play through anything—bad weather, personal problems, injuries, nuclear war. Football neatly packages all the problems you're liable to encounter in life. If you succeed on the field, chances are you'll succeed off it. At least that's my feeling.

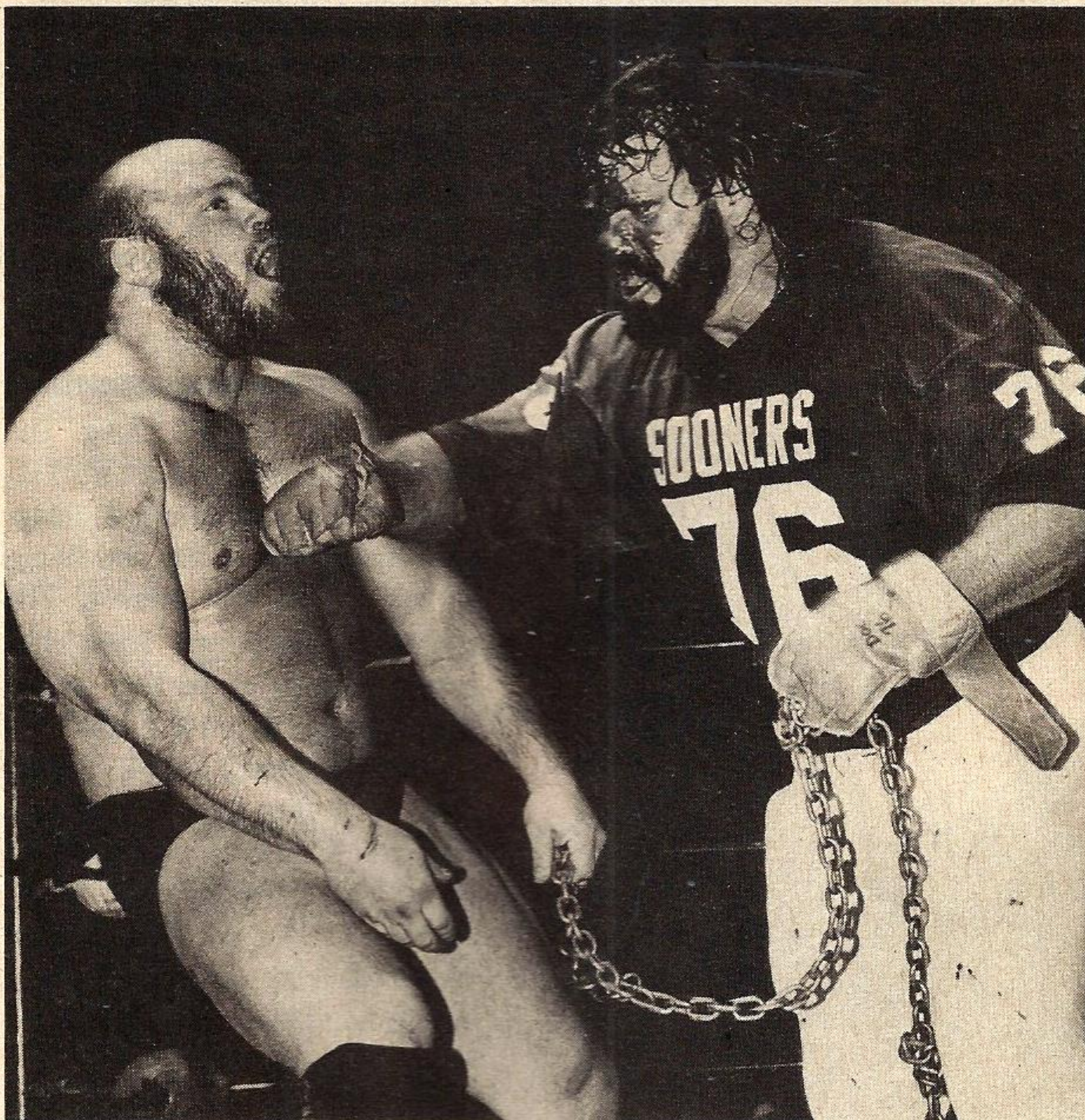
Q: Do you miss football? You played professionally for two years, correct?

A: Pro football is a different animal. There's no fun in the pros. I don't miss professional football.

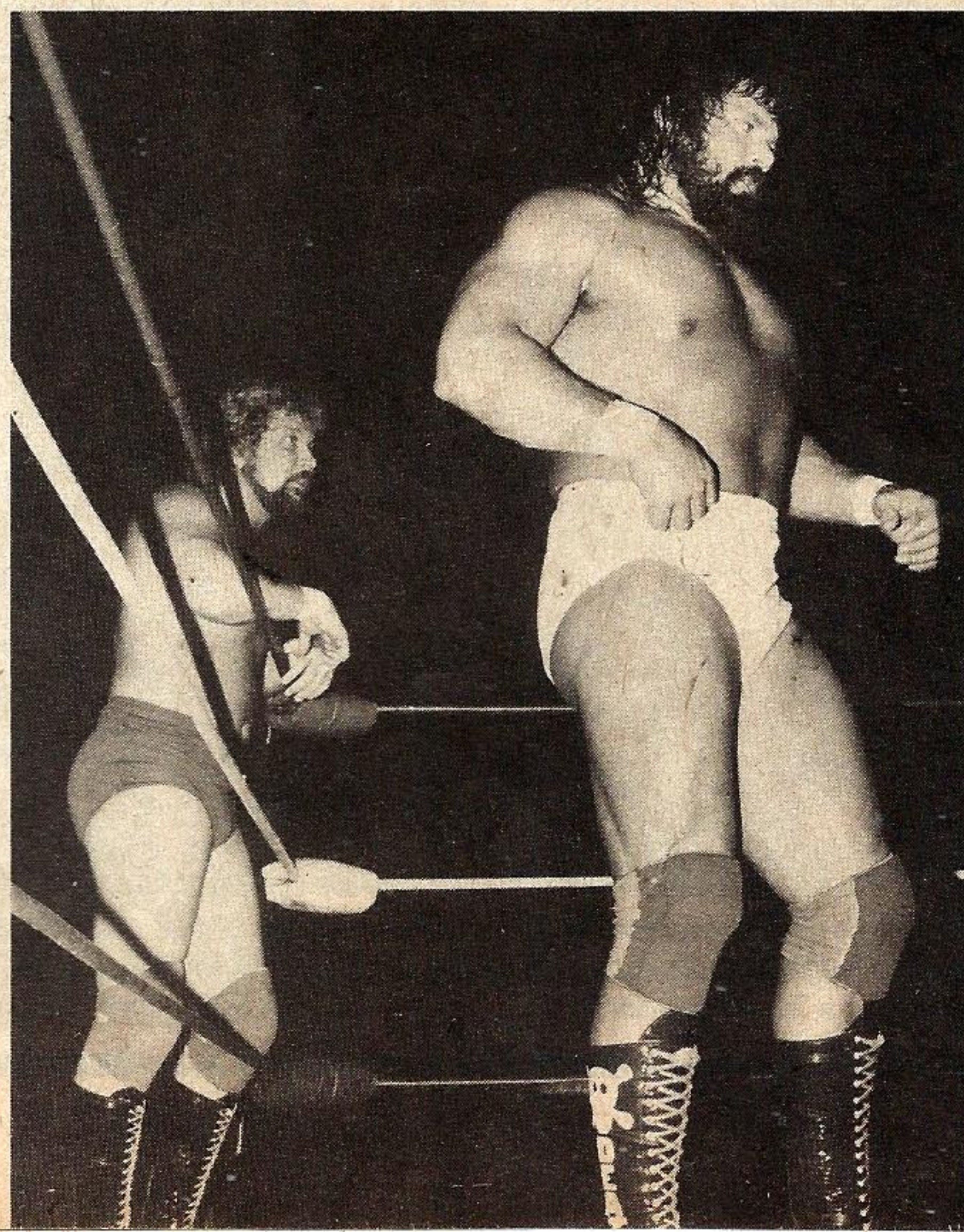
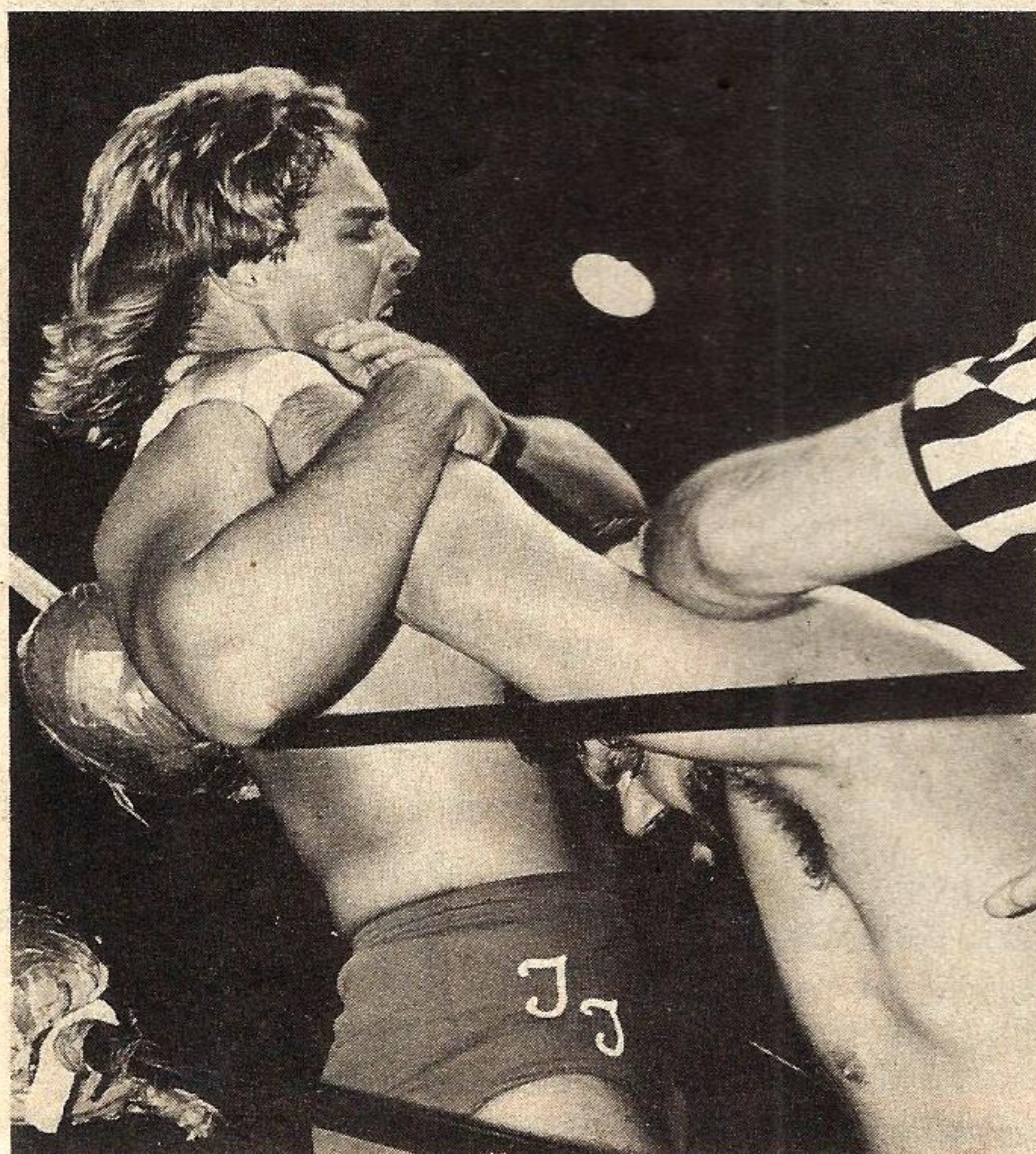
Q: But if football mirrors life as you said it does, you must also agree that life is not always a bed of roses. What do you do when the pressures off the field and out of the ring squeeze you?

A: I don't let them. Everything has a solution. People just panic too often.

Q: What if you're up by a point with a minute to play and your opponent has a first-and-goal on your



Williams staggers Buzz Sawyer en route to winning a 22-man bunkhouse stampede battle royal (above). Dr. Death locks up with Terry Taylor, a former rival against whom he no longer sees action (below left). Williams and Ted DiBiase are making their mark as one of the premier teams in the sport (below right).



one yard line?

A: You dig the hell in. You say, there ain't no way you're going to score this time. And if they do, hell, there's always another game. There's always tomorrow.

Q: If you were a fan, would you cheer for Steve Williams?

A: Cheer for that maniac? Are you kidding me? He's a killer, ain't he? Yeah, I'd cheer for him. He's mean but not malicious. He'll cut no corner in the ring, but he'll buy you a beer afterward. He's not as bad as some, better than most.

Q: Is there any extra animosity toward Dick Murdoch because of what he did to your partner?

A: You better believe there is. Anyone injures one of my friends and I feel the pain. I never really cared much for Murdoch anyway. I always thought he was a double-dealing maggot. We'll bury him.

Q: After all you've accomplished in 1985 and '86, what do you pick as your greatest achievement?

A: Being on the sidelines when the Sooners took the national championship. Now that was a thrill. Watching Coach Switzer get carried off the field. Singing the OU fight song into the night. That's real fun my friend. That's when you forget all your problems.

Q: Remember a game in Norman, Oklahoma, late in the '79 season? The national championship was on the line then, too. OU was hosting a West Coast football factory.

A: Wasn't that the game USC shut us out 12-0? First shutout we had at home in 30 years.

Q: I covered that game for our student newspaper. What a bunch of lunatics populate that town. I was happy to get out with my life.

A: Heh, heh, heh. Sounds like Norman. Helluva town. Makes you forget your problems.

Q: Doesn't sound like you have many problems to forget, Dr. Death. Good luck with your new career.

A: Same career, same man. Different perception. Life is funny that way. You just gotta roll with it. ☐

Wrestling 86

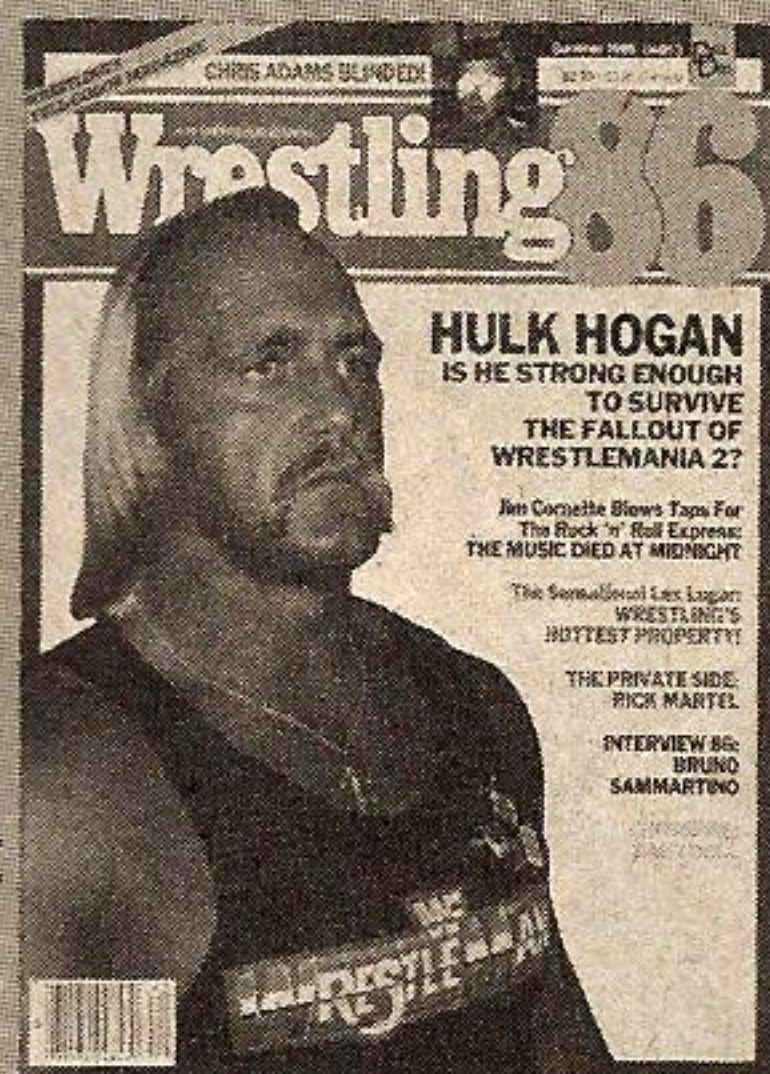
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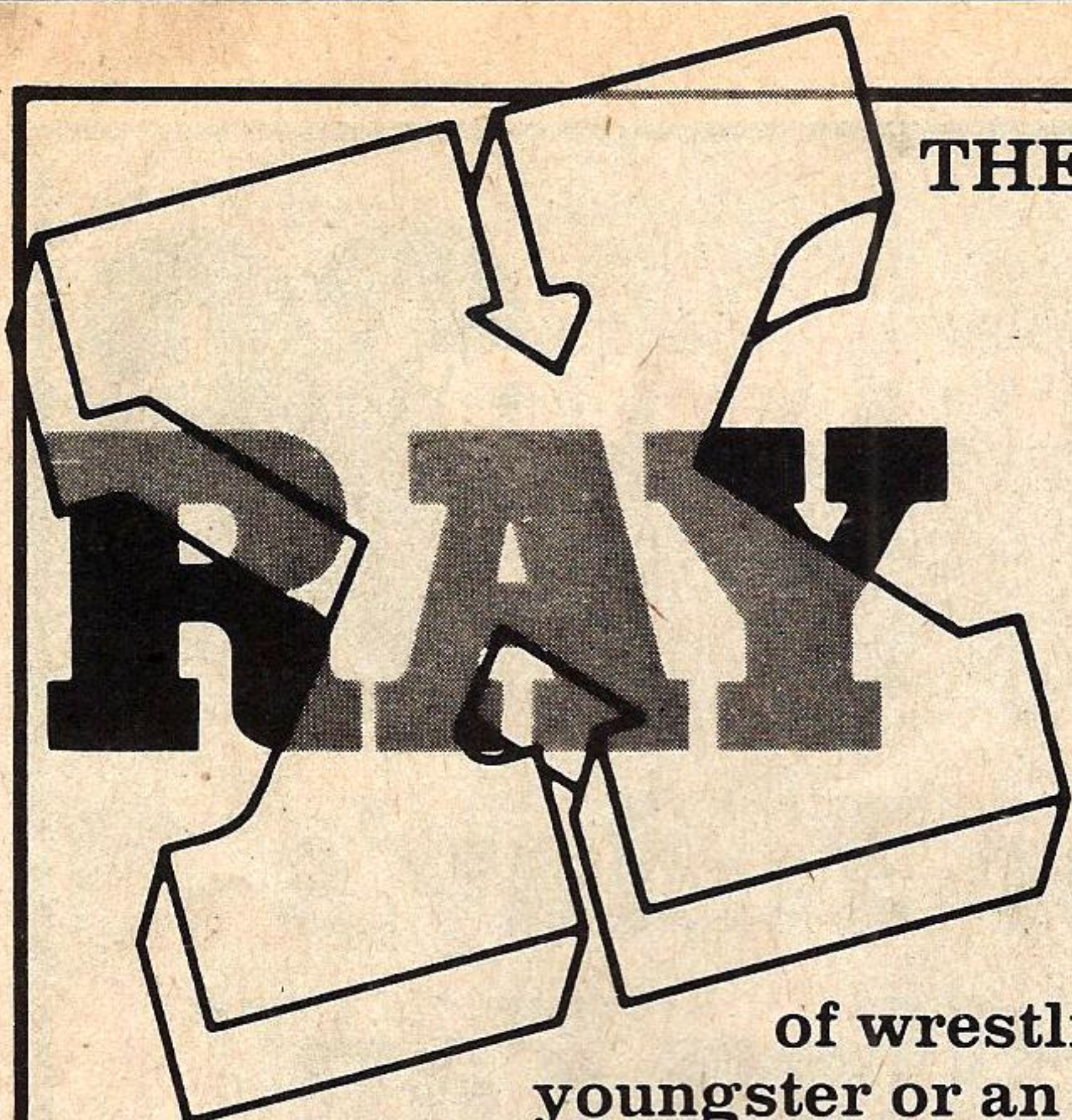


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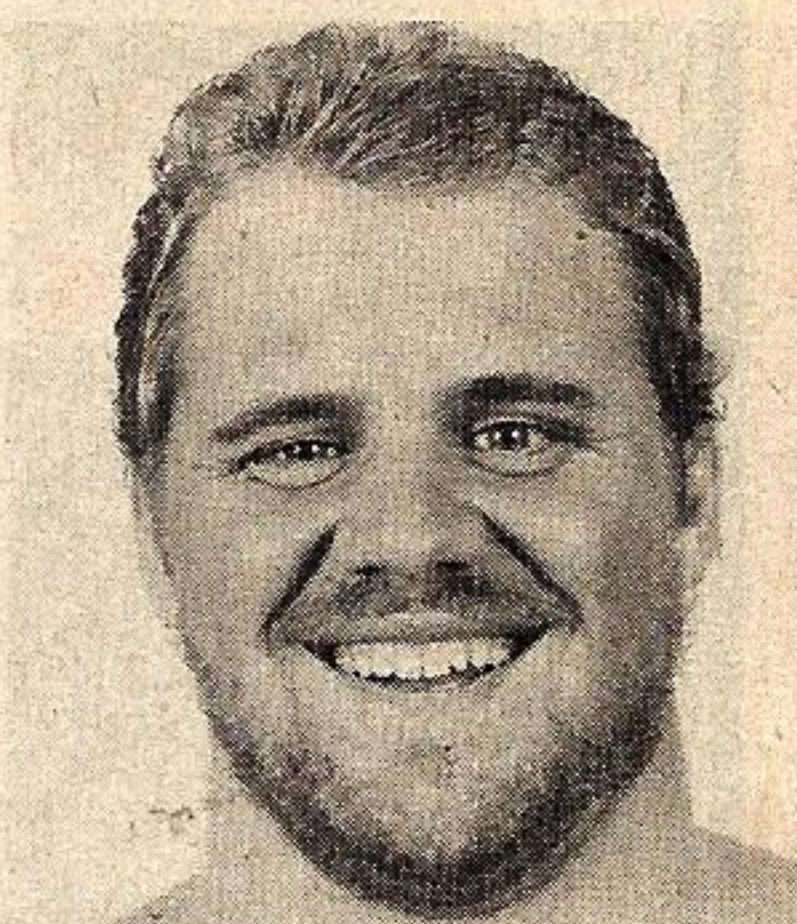
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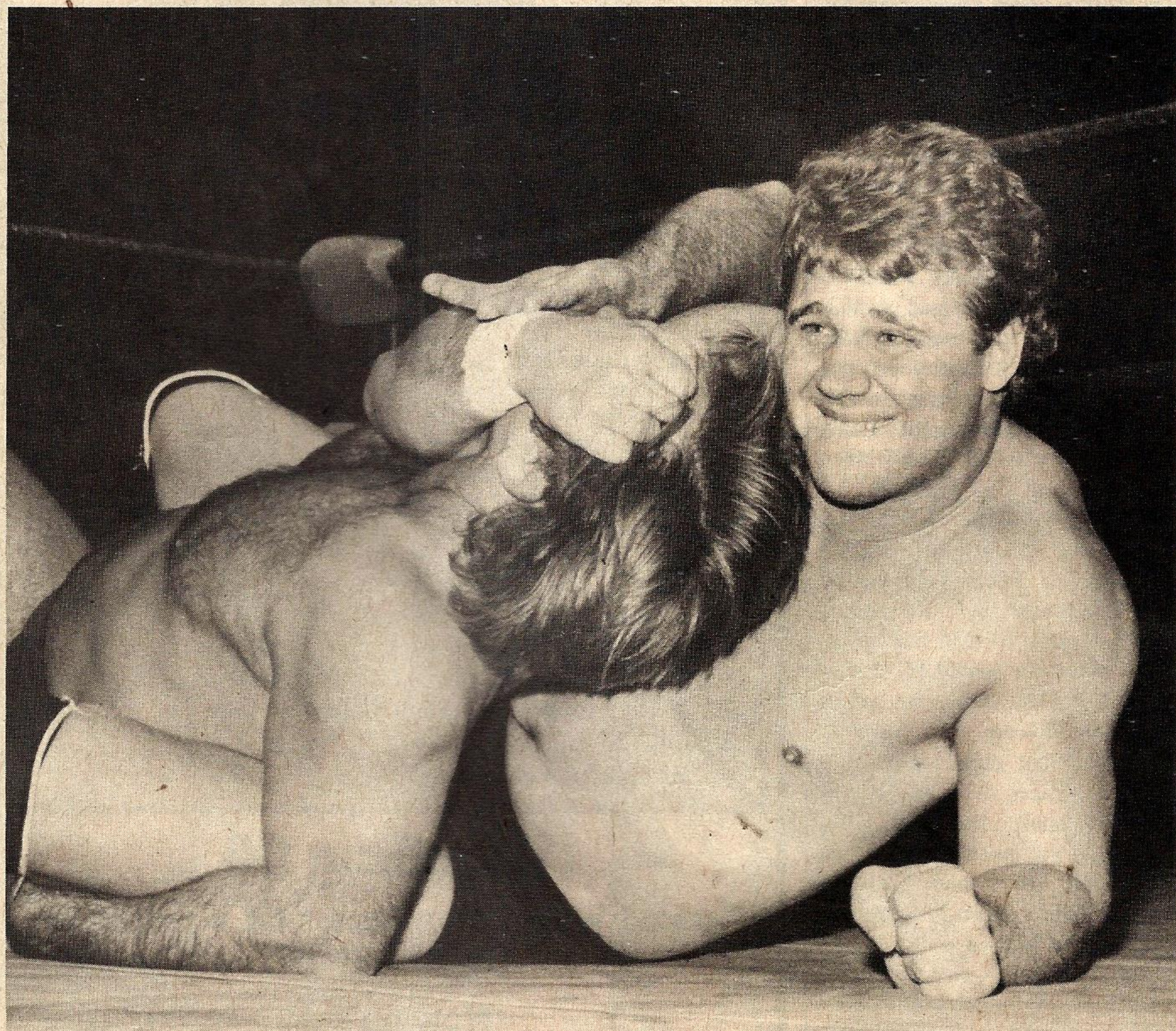


THE WRESTLER PANEL EXAMINES

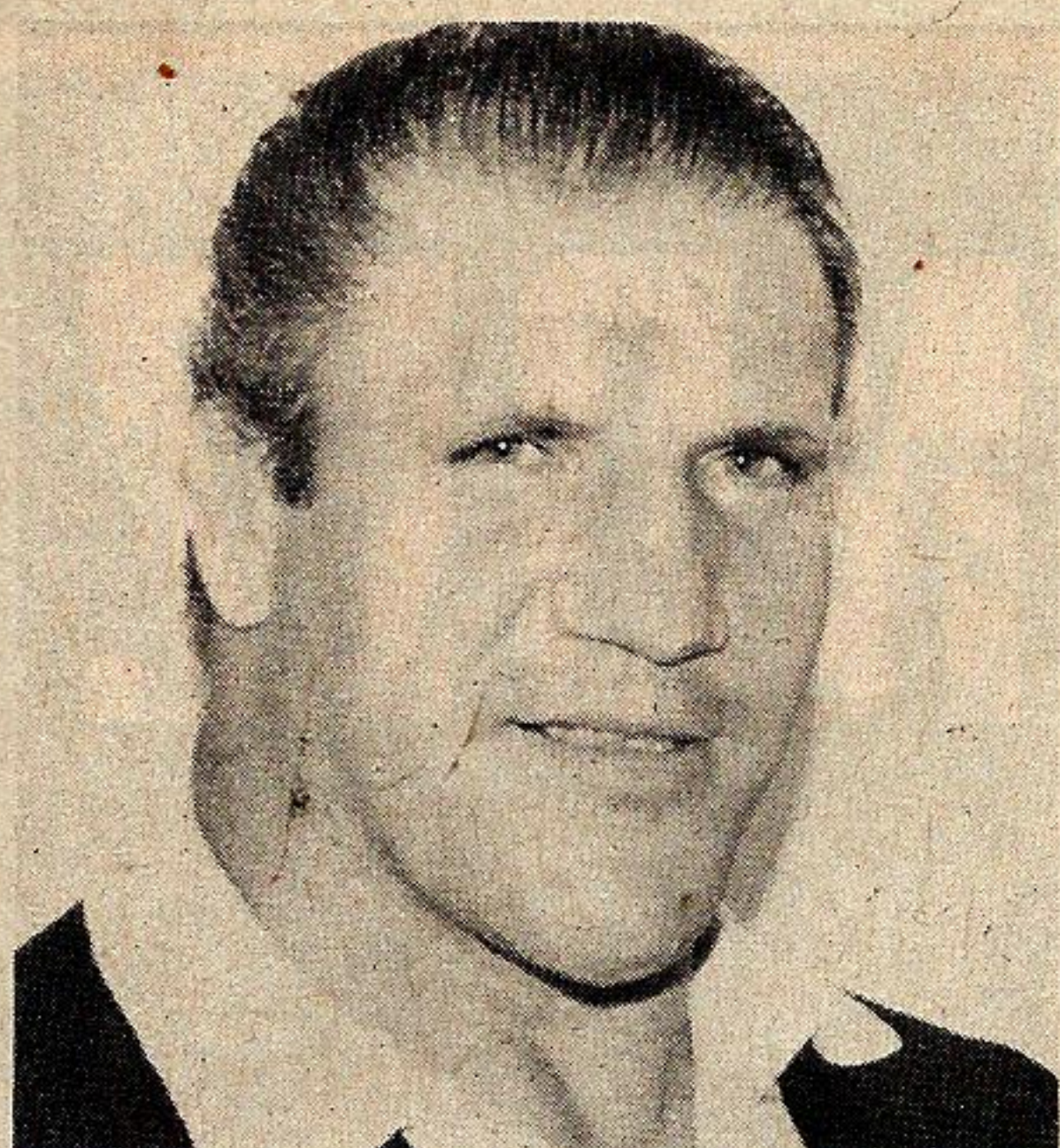


**CURT
HENNIG**

Each month
THE WRESTLER'S panel of experts
will offer their candid opinions of one
of wrestling's stars. Whether an up-and-coming
youngster or an established superstar in his own right,
our panel will always be frank and honest without fear of reprisal



Curt Hennig, a young master of the science of professional wrestling, is rapidly establishing himself as one of the sport's premier stars. As he defends the AWA World tag team championship along with Scott Hall (against Larry Zbyszko, above), Hennig's considerable talents will become better known to the wrestling world.



BRUNO SAMMARTINO

"You know, this Curt Hennig is a solid wrestler, but I think he's got to bulk up just a bit. I understand he's in the process of doing exactly that, and I think in six months he'll be very formidable. His scientific skills are very good. If Curt wasn't already obligated to teaming with Scott Hall, I'd like to see what he and my son David could do together."

Bruno Sammartino is known as wrestling's "Living Legend." He is the most popular wrestler to ever hold the WWF title.



KILLER KOWALSKI

"I wrestled Curt's old man, Larry, a few times in my day, and I never had much respect for him. If you ask me, that 'Ax' was pretty dull. And the kid suffers from the same problem. He tries, I think, to get angry in that ring, but I don't see any natural killer instinct in him. That's something that can cost a man a lot; this is one sport where nice guys *do* finish last."

Killer Kowalski, one of the most sadistic rulebreakers in the sport's history, runs a wrestling school in Reading, Massachusetts.



GENE KINISKI

"This kid is nothing. He won the AWA tag team title on a fluke, and he's going to lose it quickly. He's got scientific skills, sure, but he hasn't got any fire. He hasn't got the ability to build up enough anger in a match. Hell, he couldn't get steamed enough to boil water for a cup of tea. He's a softie, and there's no room in this sport for softies. He's going to get himself very hurt someday. Soon."

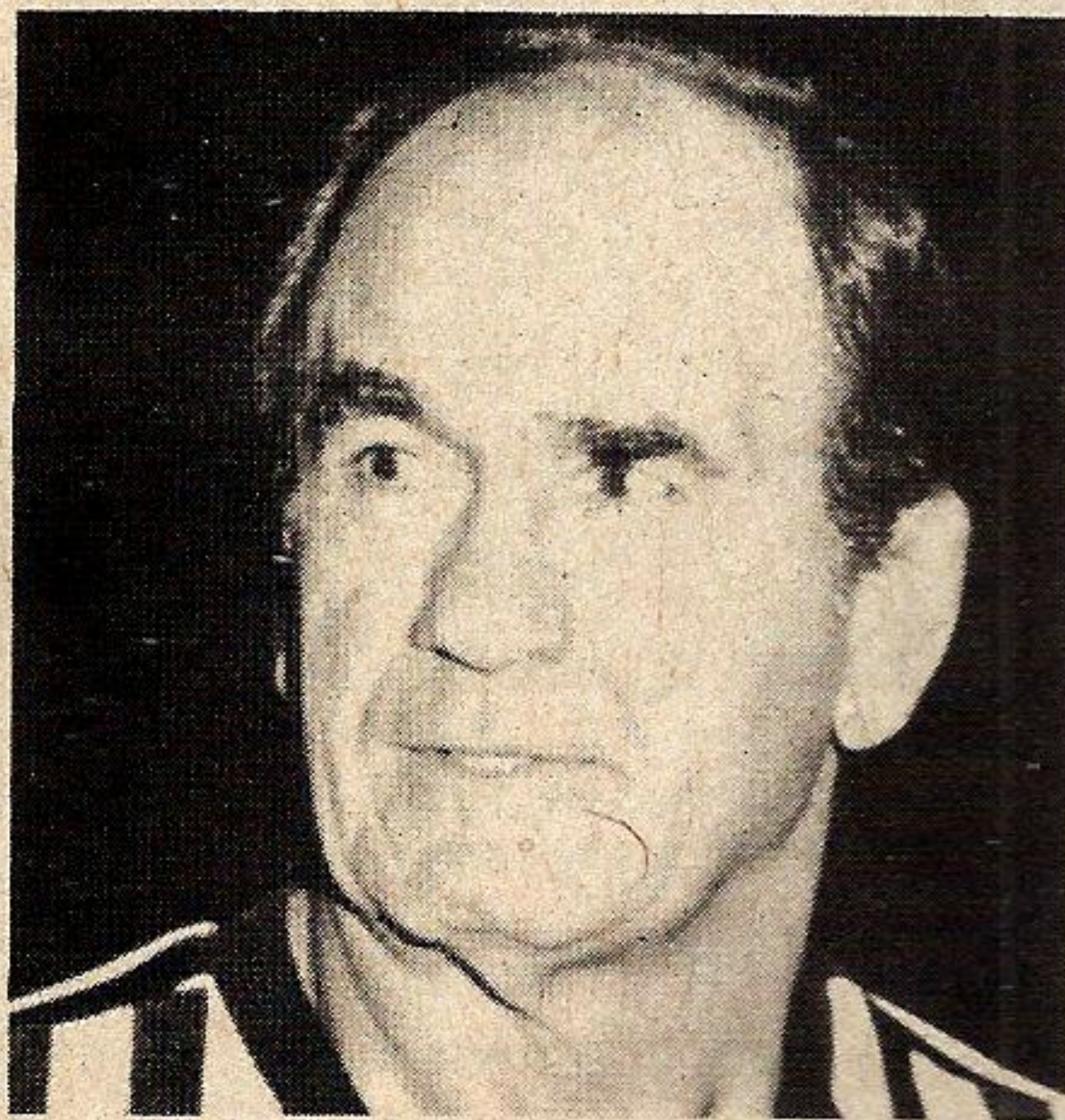
Gene Kiniski is a rugged Canadian who was NWA World champion in the late 1960s.



BUDDY ROGERS

"For several years, Curt Hennig has been in that ring, wrestling, wrestling, wrestling. He's a hard wrestler, very well-versed in the basics of the sport. But what really impresses me is the fact that his association with Scott Hall has paid off: I hear that Curt's been training with Scott, and I see it's paid off in his physique."

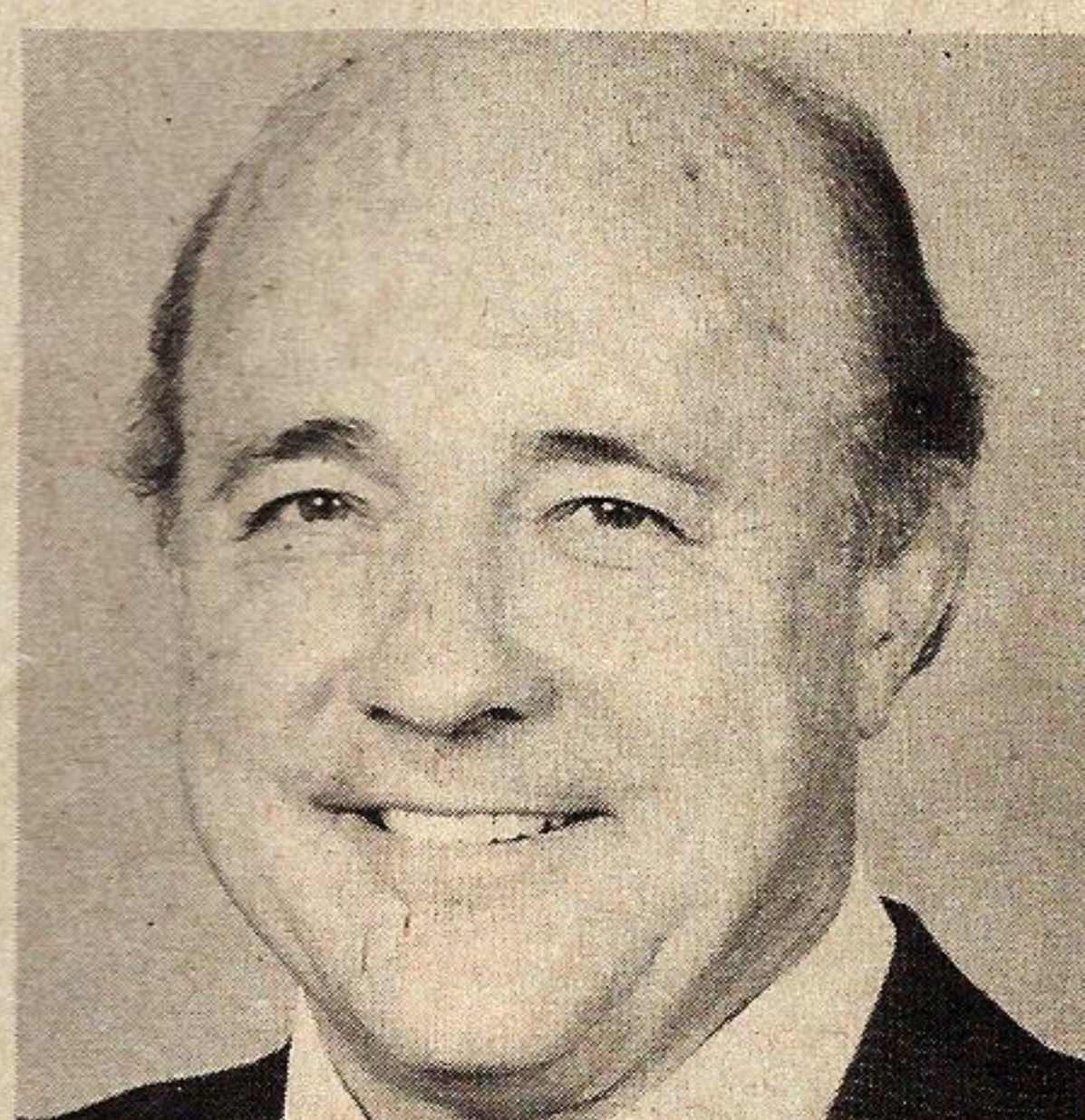
Buddy Rogers is the only man to hold both the NWA World title and the WWF title.



LOU THESZ

"If I've said it once, I've said it a thousand times: You've got to do your homework if you want to be a competitive wrestler in that ring. You've got to be able to do more than kick and punch. Curt Hennig has done his homework. He was a very, very good amateur wrestler, and he knows how to carry those skills over into the professional ring."

Lou Thesz held the NWA World title six times during his fabulous 50-year career. Many consider him the greatest all-round wrestler in history.

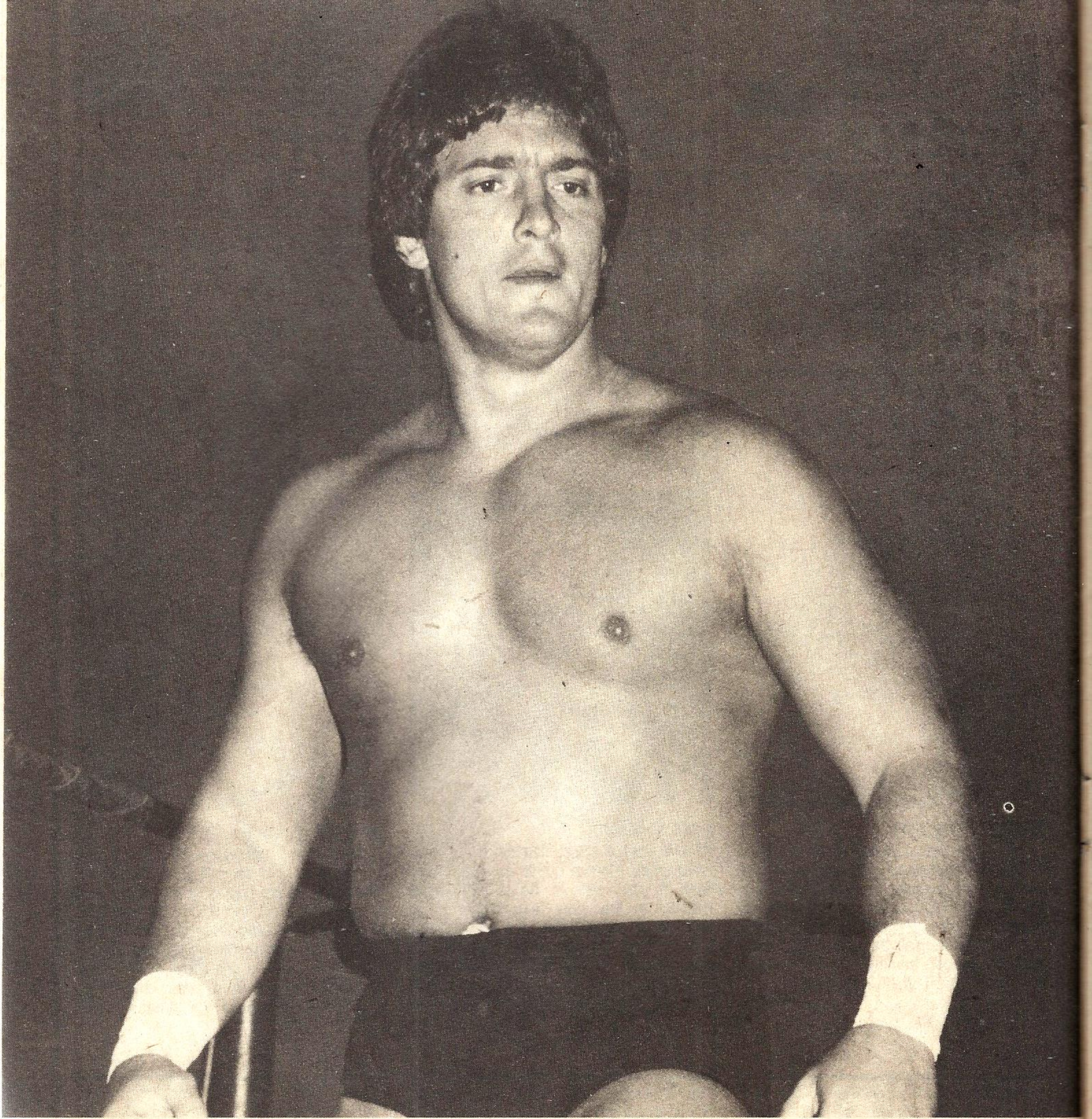


VERNE GAGNE

"I give Curt a lot of credit. He's a fine young man, a second-generation star, dedicated to the basics of the sport. And it's paid off: Curt and Scott Hall now hold the AWA World tag team title, which they won in a remarkable 58-minute match against Jim Garvin and Steve Regal. A lot of Curt's opponents underestimate him, and that's their biggest mistake."

Verne Gagne held the AWA World title a record 11 times. He was voted "Best Scientific Wrestler" of the last 25 years by the wrestling media.

GINO HERNANDEZ



A CAREER RETROSPECTIVE

He lived life in the fast lane, and his career showed it: Only 28 years old, and Gino Hernandez already had 11 remarkable years as a pro behind him. And like a spectacular display of fireworks, Hernandez's career ended in a brilliant blaze—of controversy and tragedy

GINO HERNANDEZ STEPPED into the ring in Ft. Worth, Texas, and screamed a challenge to former tag team partner and now bitter enemy Chris Adams:

"I have a bottle of liquid here that, rubbed in your scalp, will take away all of your hair! Come on into the ring, Chris Adams! Come on in!"

Adams answered:

"How about we change the terms of this match. How about whoever loses tonight has that rubbed in his head?"

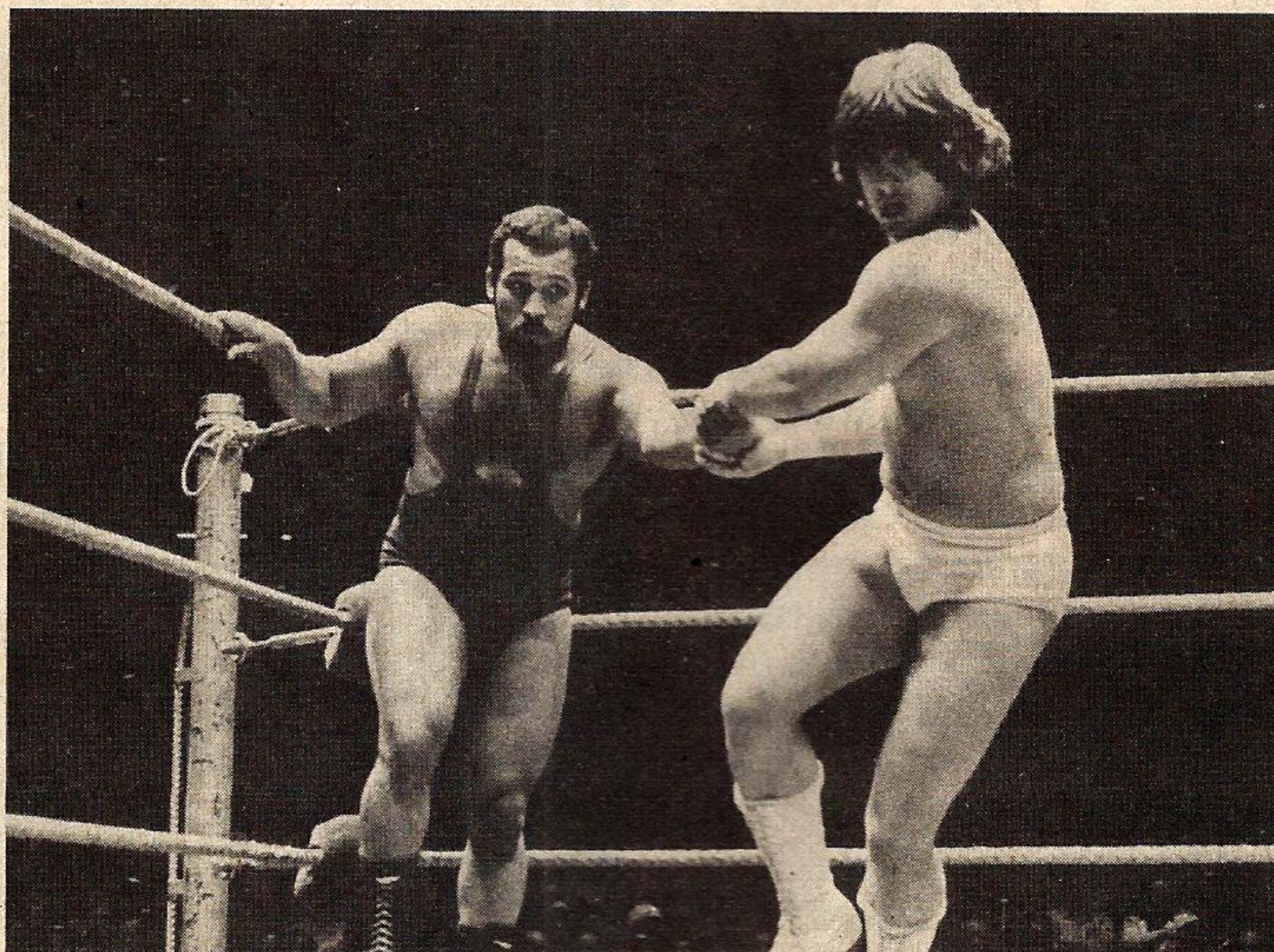
A violent and emotional match was underway seconds later.

Before long, though, tragedy would strike: Several minutes into the match, Hernandez would grab the bottle, swing around, and squirt its contents into Adams' eyes.

Adams screamed in horror and pain. Before long, the bitter truth was known: Chris Adams was blind.

Hernandez fled back to the dressing room. Ironically, tragically, the blinding of Chris Adams would be the last thing ever that Gino would do in a wrestling ring. Eight days later, Hernandez was found dead in his Dallas apartment, the victim of what the Dallas County Medical Examiner's office termed "an acute cocaine overdose."

Gino Hernandez may not have been a favorite son of the Lone Star State, but he was certainly one of Texas' more colorful and well-known athletes.



A 19-year-old Gino Hernandez shocked Johnny Rodz during his Madison Square Garden debut in 1977. The veteran Rodz predicted in the loser's locker room that Hernandez was destined for superstardom.

He grew up in Houston, where he became known for his athletic skills, particularly in basketball. But the lure of the pro wrestling ranks was strong, due mainly to the fact that his stepfather Luis Hernandez was a pro grappler. Gino wanted to quit high school to enter the sport.

It was longtime Houston promoter Paul Boesch who convinced Hernandez to get his diploma. Shortly after graduation in 1975, Hernandez made his pro debut in Houston, and quickly rose to prominence in Texas as one of that state's most hated grapplers ever.

"My first memory of Gino is from 1977," recalls Senior Editor Bill Apter. "He made his Madison Square Garden debut against Johnny Rodz. At the time, Hernandez was virtually unknown to New York fans. Yet from the moment Gino entered the ring to less than polite applause and the moment he pinned Rodz to a tremendous ovation, the fans realized that Hernandez was something special.

"Gino was unspoiled back then," Apter continued. "He was gracious, accepting compliments that he was a future world champion. But those

kinds of compliments can easily turn someone into an egomaniac."

Ego or not, Gino remained an expert wrestler throughout his career. He made his mark in Texas, and it was there that he developed his strong love/hate relationship with the fans. In 1980, Gino became so enthralled with himself that he dyed his hair blond and proclaimed that he wanted to be known as "Gorgeous" Gino.

He feuded with Tully Blanchard for a long time, but it was his battles with the Von Erichs that rocketed him to true fame. With fame came money. And beautiful women. And fast cars. And the ego grew.

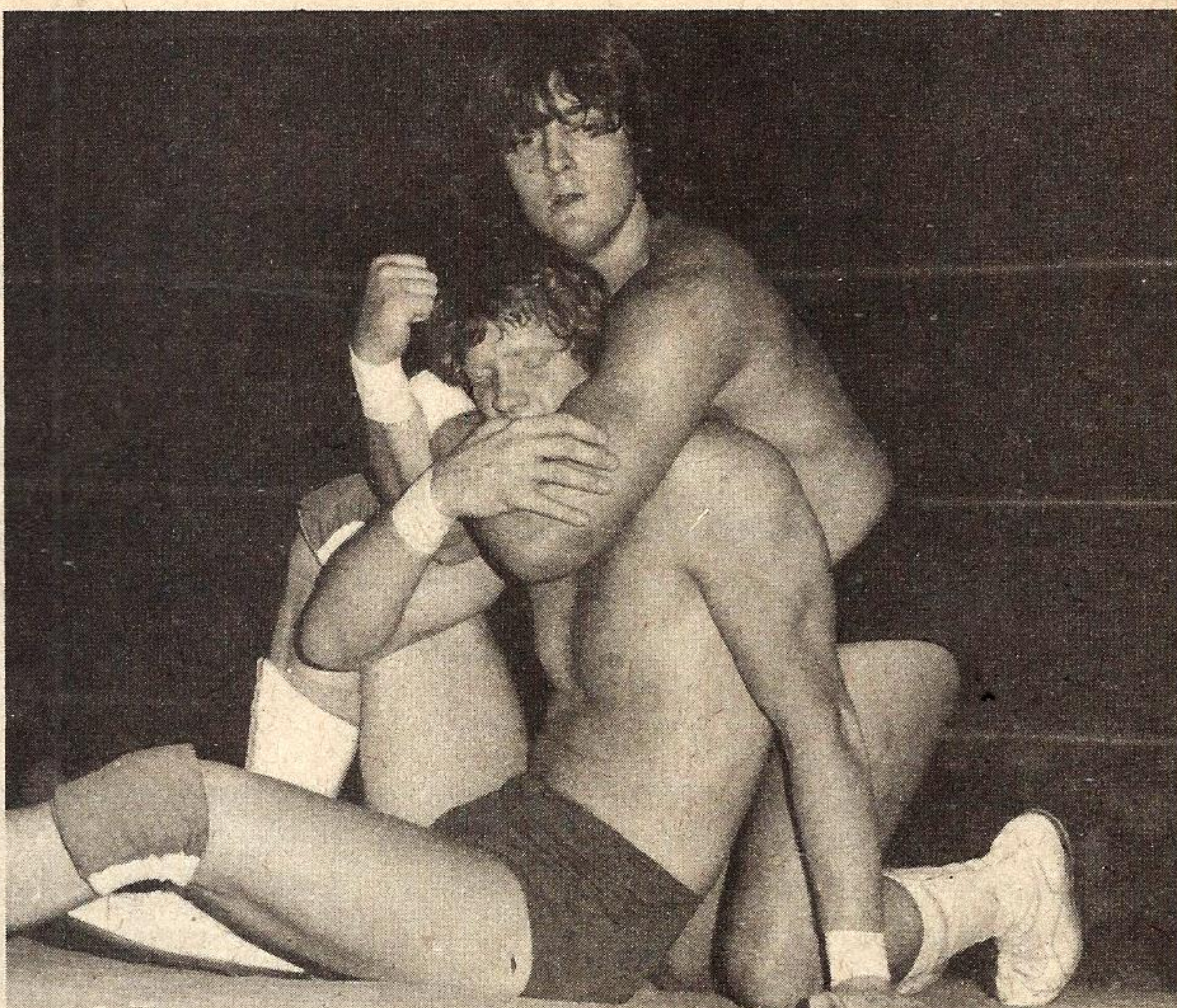
Gino started demanding private dressing rooms. He quit wrestling for a while to pursue a Hollywood career, but even that failure couldn't diminish his strong ego. He returned to Texas, and again got caught up in the cycle: money, cars, women, champagne. But he remained the consummate wrestler, and at one time held the World Class Texas and American singles titles and a portion of the World Class six-man title *at the same time!*

But just as cocaine has treacherously altered the lives of young men in the entertainment and rock 'n' roll worlds, so, too, it found its way into the wrestling world. It's unfortunate target: Gino Hernandez.

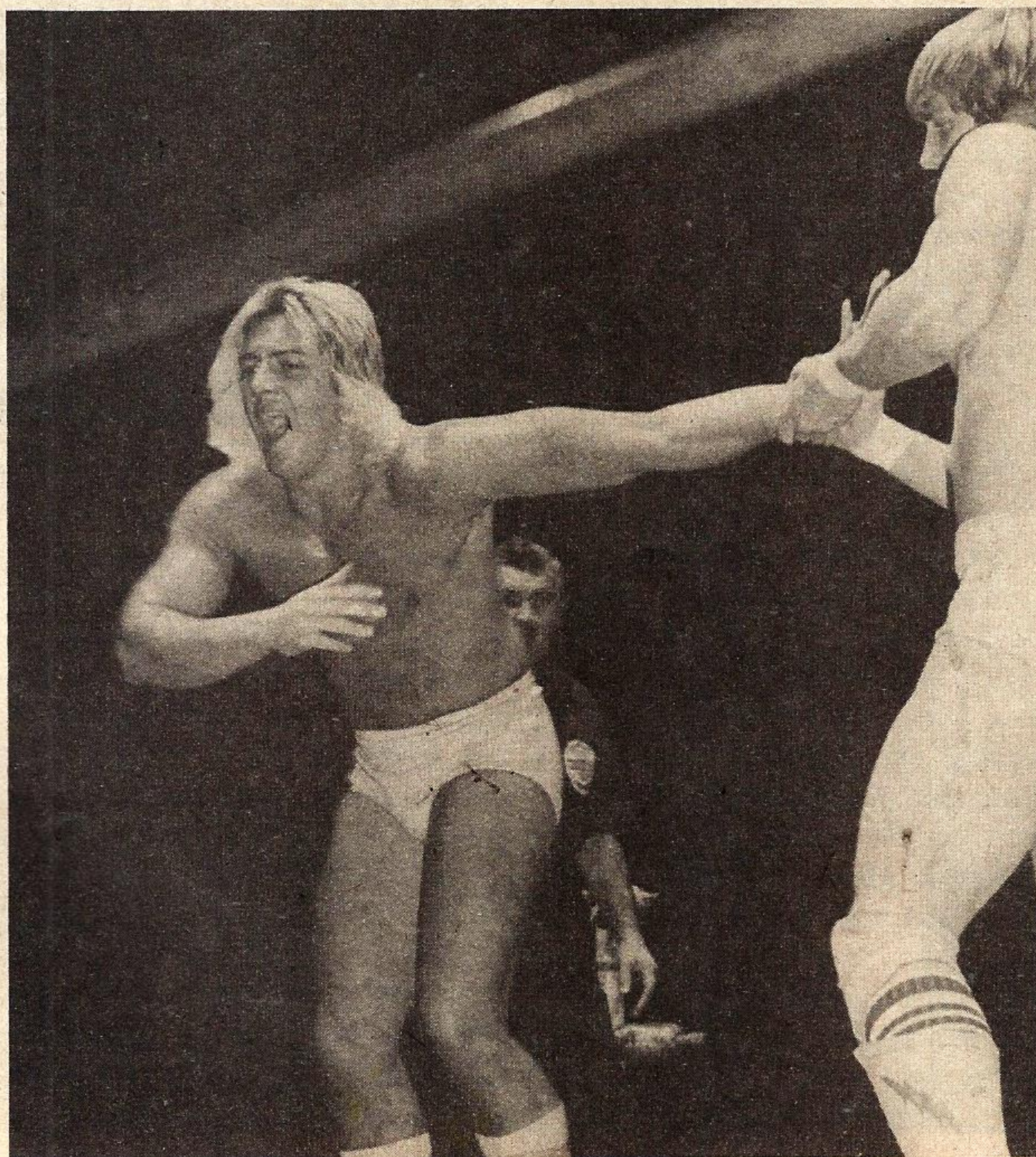
Gino was buried on February 8. The motorcade to the cemetery was nearly three miles long. At the funeral, Gino's friends drank toasts to him the way he would have wanted it: with a case of Dom Perignon champagne. And as the casket was lowered into the ground, four empty bottles were placed on top, one on each of the casket's corners, the way he would have wanted it.

The Wrestler mourns the passing of one of wrestling's brightest young stars. We salute Gino Hernandez with this look back at some controversial highlights of a controversial career. We've made no effort to edit out the events that some fans may have found repugnant or distasteful. This is Gino Hernandez, the good and the bad.

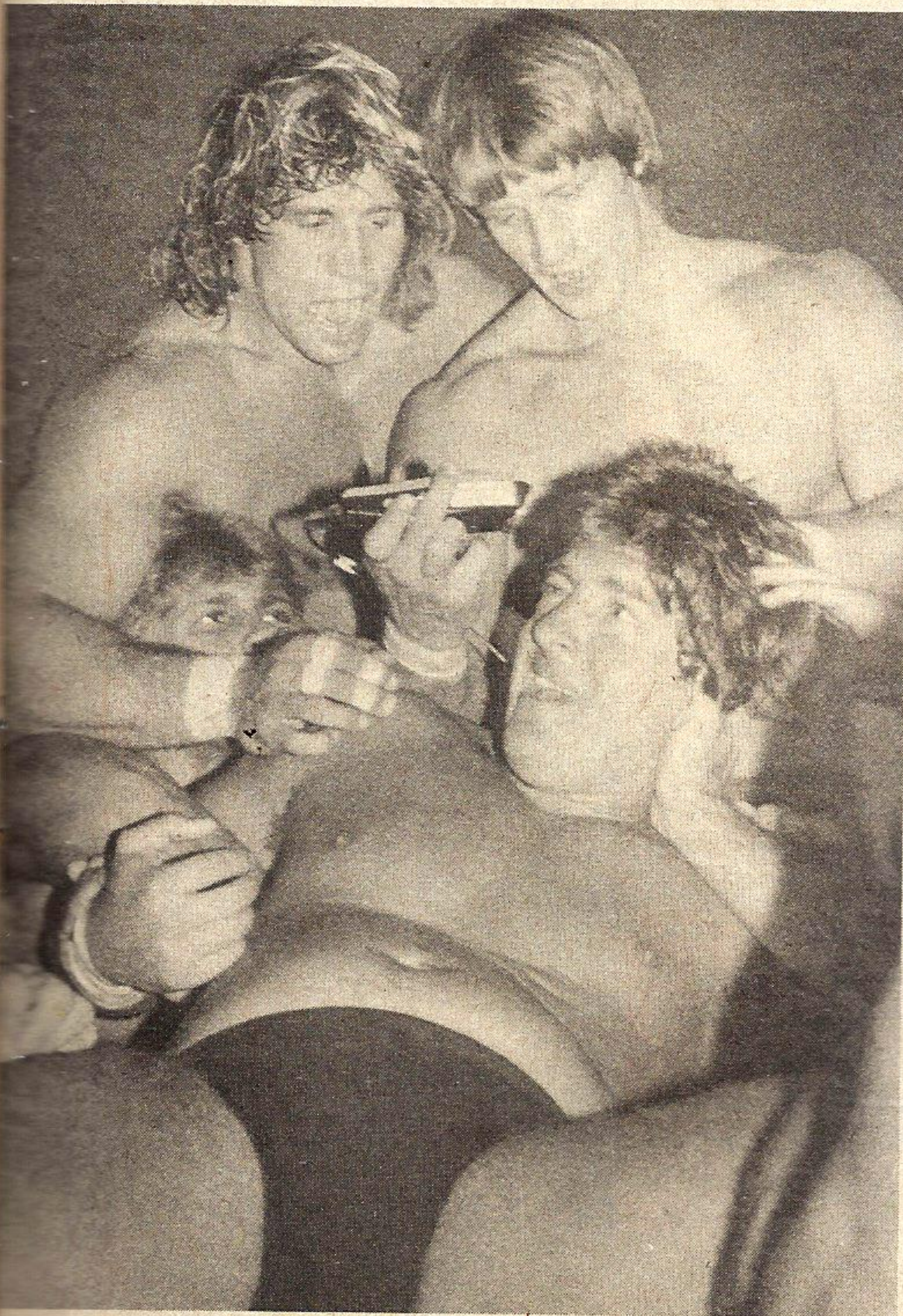
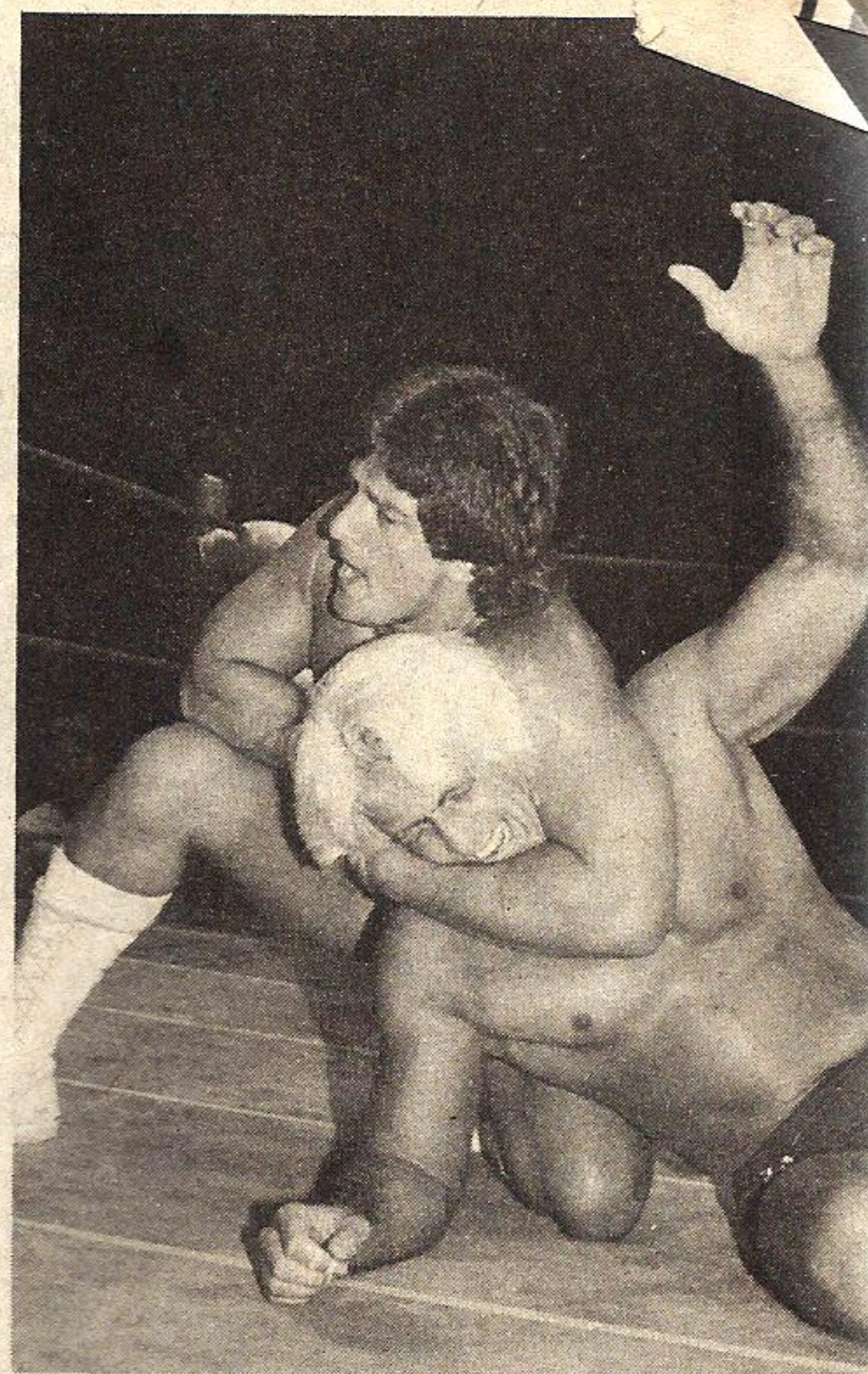
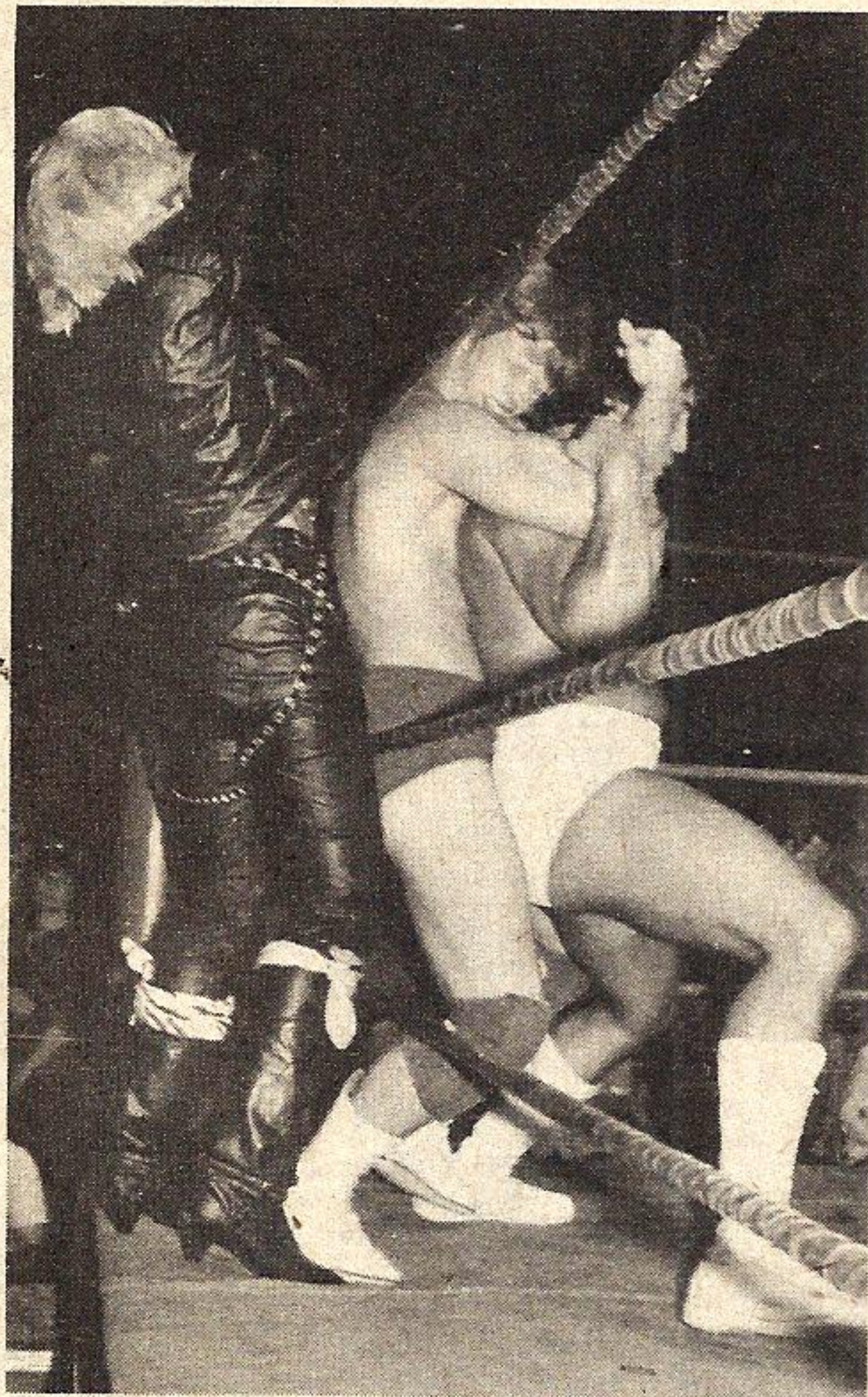
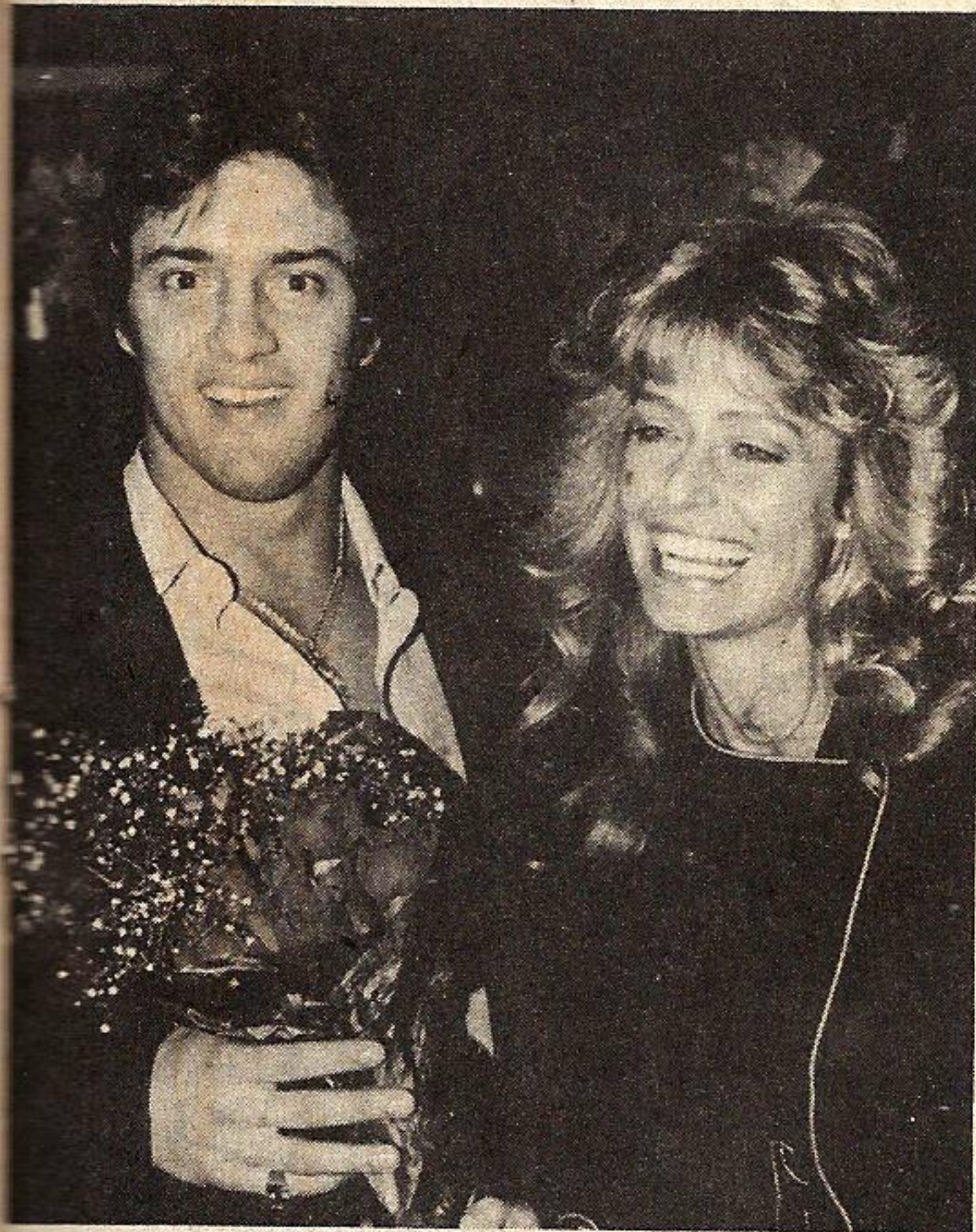
The way he would have wanted it. □



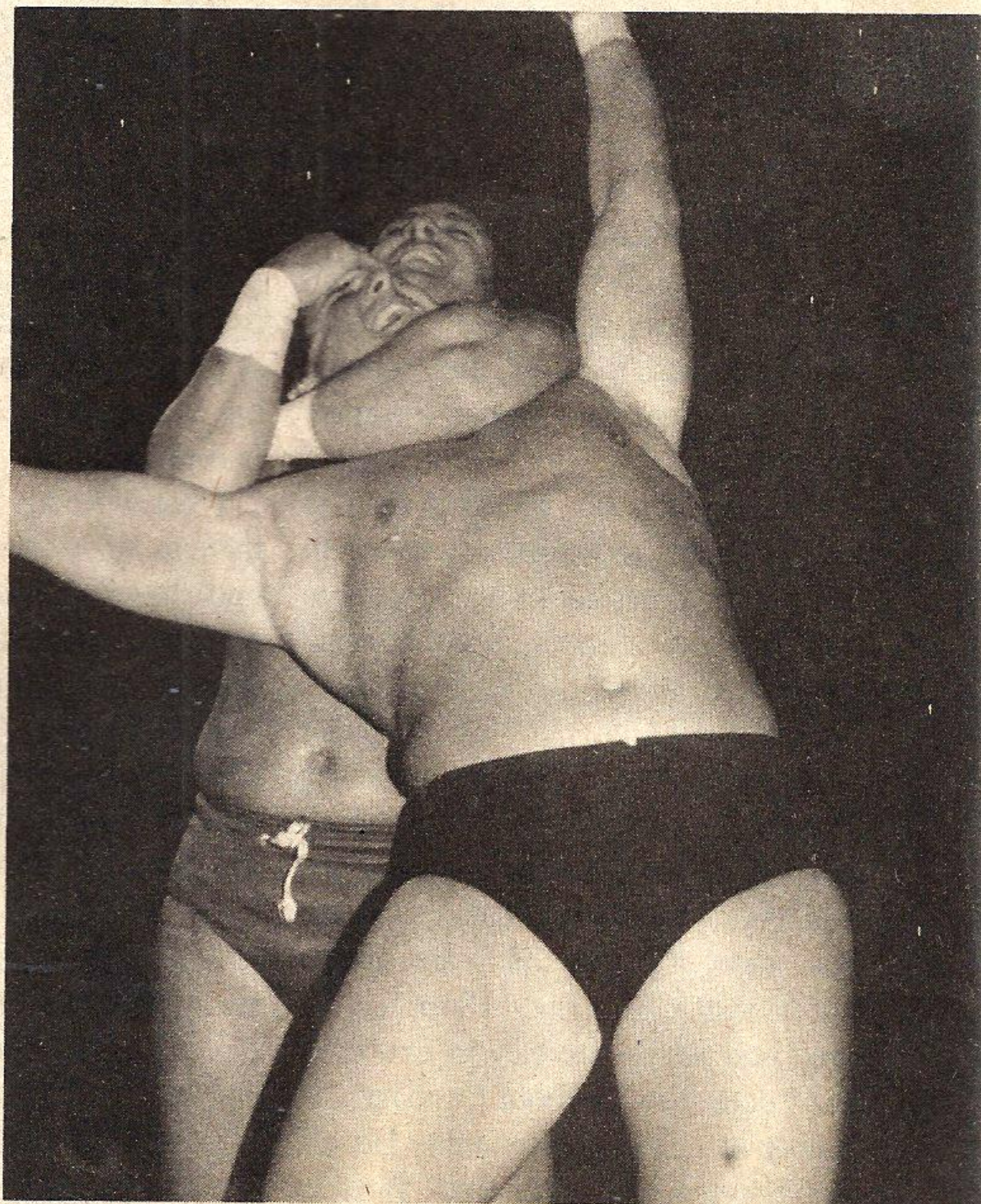
Above: Hernandez weakens David Von Erich with a rear chinlock in 1978. Neither of these two rivals would see their 30th birthday. Below: At one time or another, Hernandez feuded individually with every Von Erich brother. Gino, who bleached his hair blond in 1980, has his arm twisted by Kevin.



Gino left wrestling for a year to try to make it in Hollywood. He didn't get any parts, but he made friends with such jet-setters as Farrah Fawcett.



Above left: Hernandez backs Mike Von Erich into a swinging Nickla Roberts, who illegally ends Mike's first American title reign in 1984. Above right: Gino envied NWA champion Ric Flair but could never take his title. Below left: Hernandez, along with his partner, Chris Adams, were humiliated in a hair vs. hair match against the Von Erichs. Below: Gino applies a sleeper against Adams in what would be his final match.



Hulk Hogan's Route To Roddy Piper:

DISCARD THE ACE TO GET TO THE JOKER!

Sent as an agent of destruction by Roddy Piper, Bob Orton was ousted with a sleight of hand, disappearing like an egg inside a magician's handkerchief. His target, WWF champion Hulk Hogan, now has his path clear to Piper

By Matt Brock

RODDY PIPER HAS not ranked as one of WWF champion Hulk Hogan's primary challenges in 1986, but that doesn't mean the cunning Scot hasn't remained Hogan's primary antagonist.

While cutting his wrestling time in half, Piper has redoubled his efforts to make life as miserable for Hogan in ways only his diabolic Scottish mind can conjure.

Piper's duplicity may be in danger of backfiring. His castle of treachery threatens to collapse upon him and his evil staff (I, for one, would sing at the madman's wake, tap dance on his grave—and it's been 35 years since I last hoofed it in public). Piper has tittered and jabbed his way to eminence and done so without trading an armbar or chinlock in months. His kilt hasn't seen a drycleaner since WrestleMania, yet his audacious condemna-

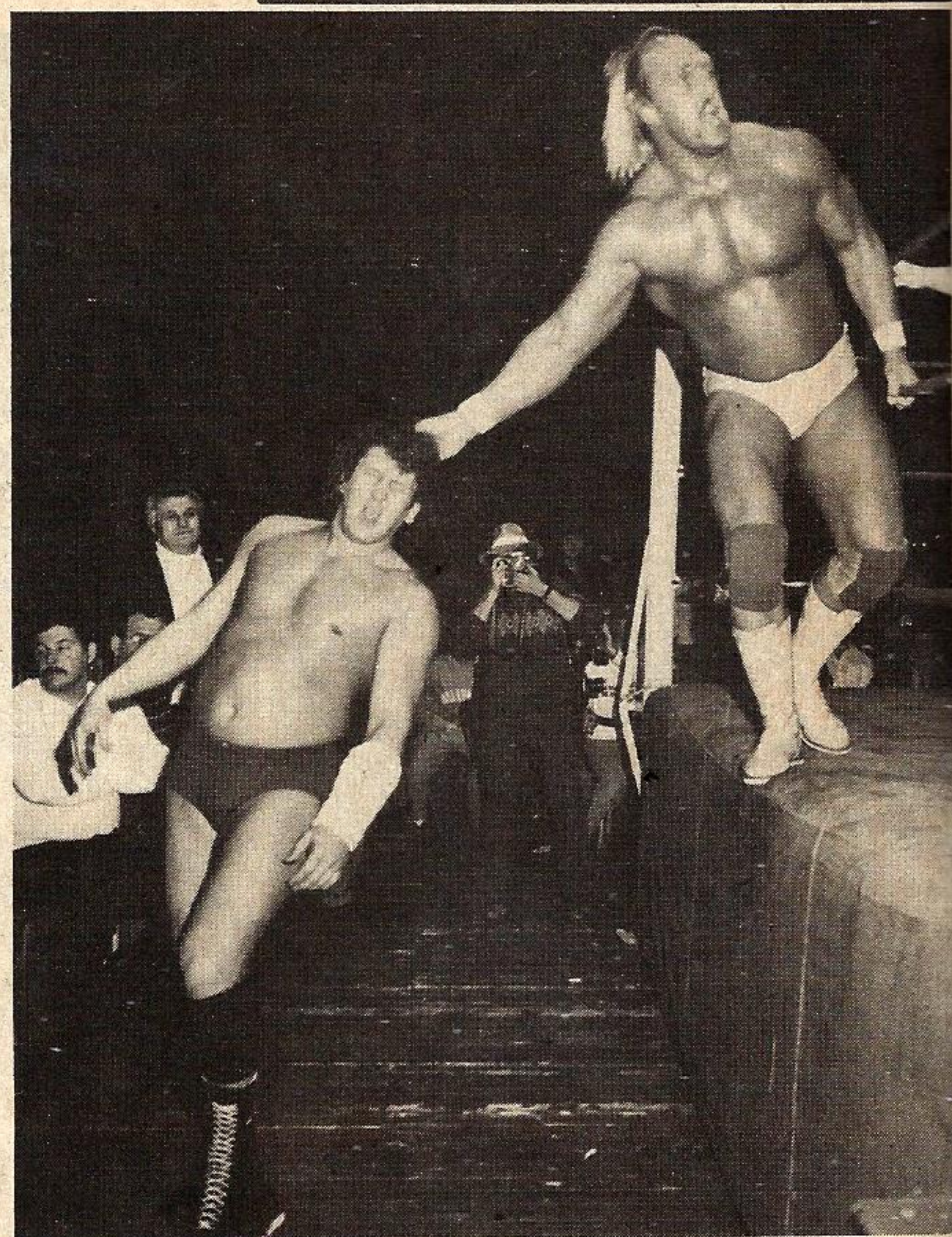
tions of Hogan continue unabated.

What kind of man boasts supreme courage, while hiding behind the power of his microphone? While relying on the unquestioned loyalty of his underlings?

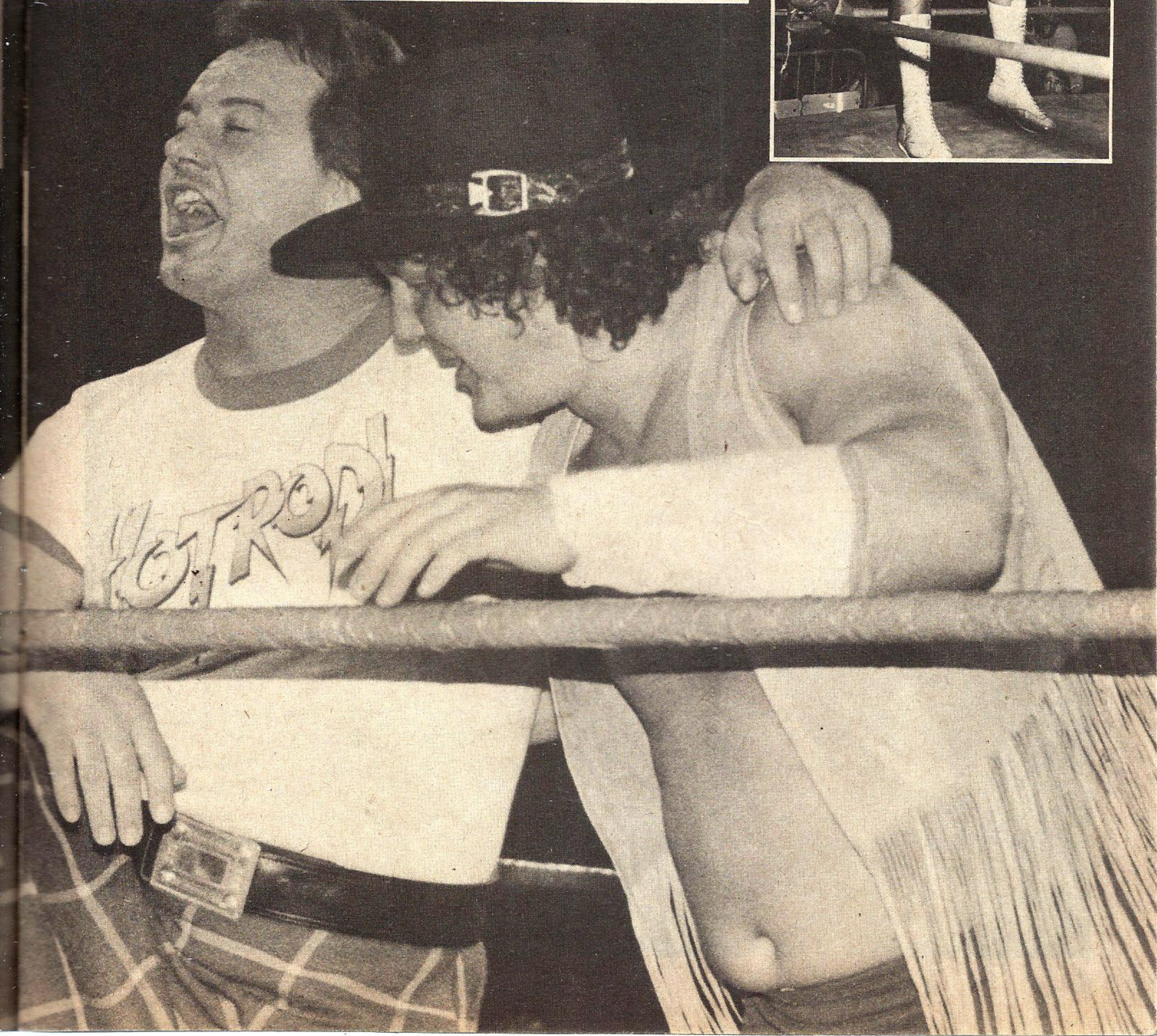
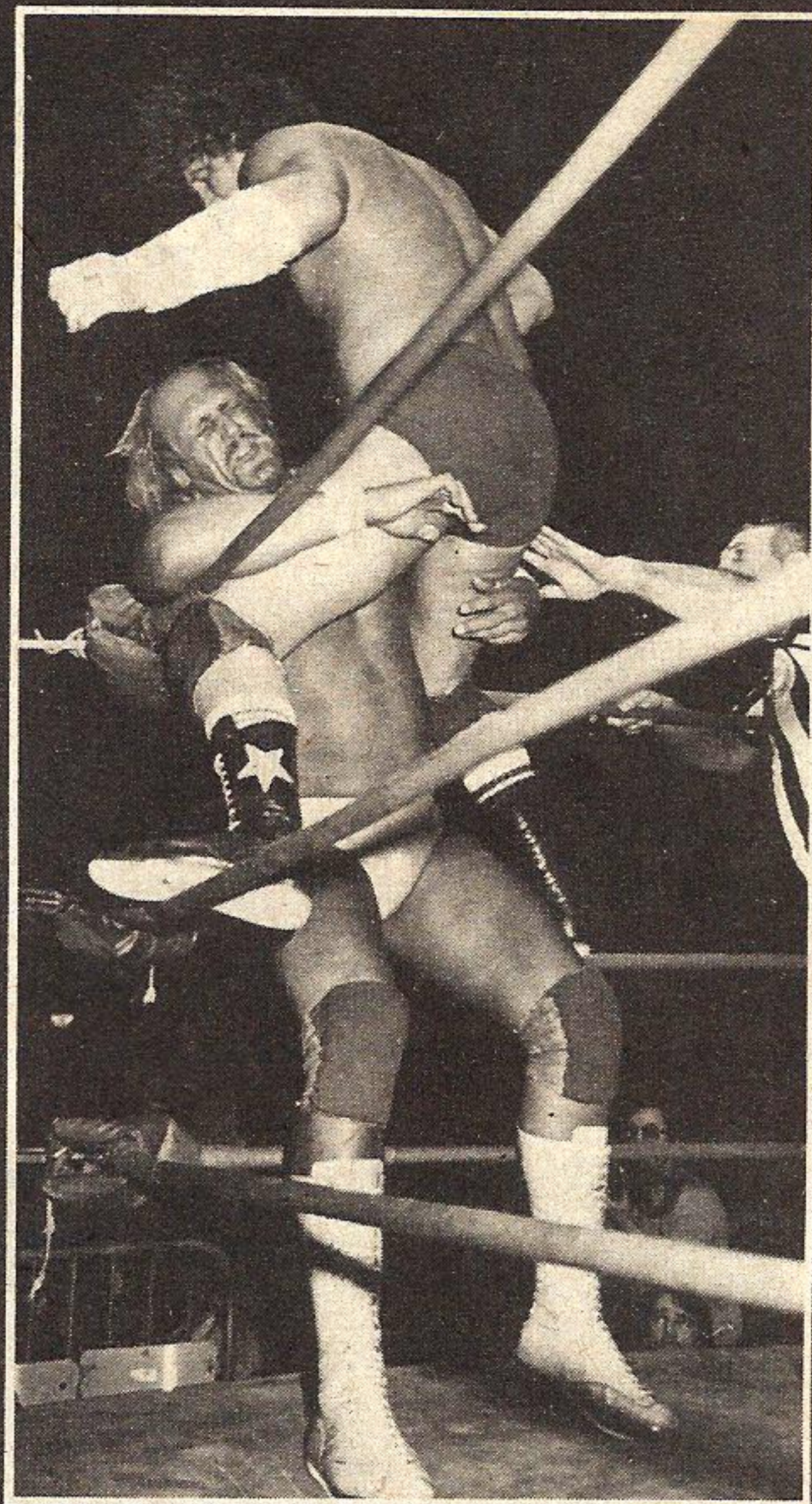
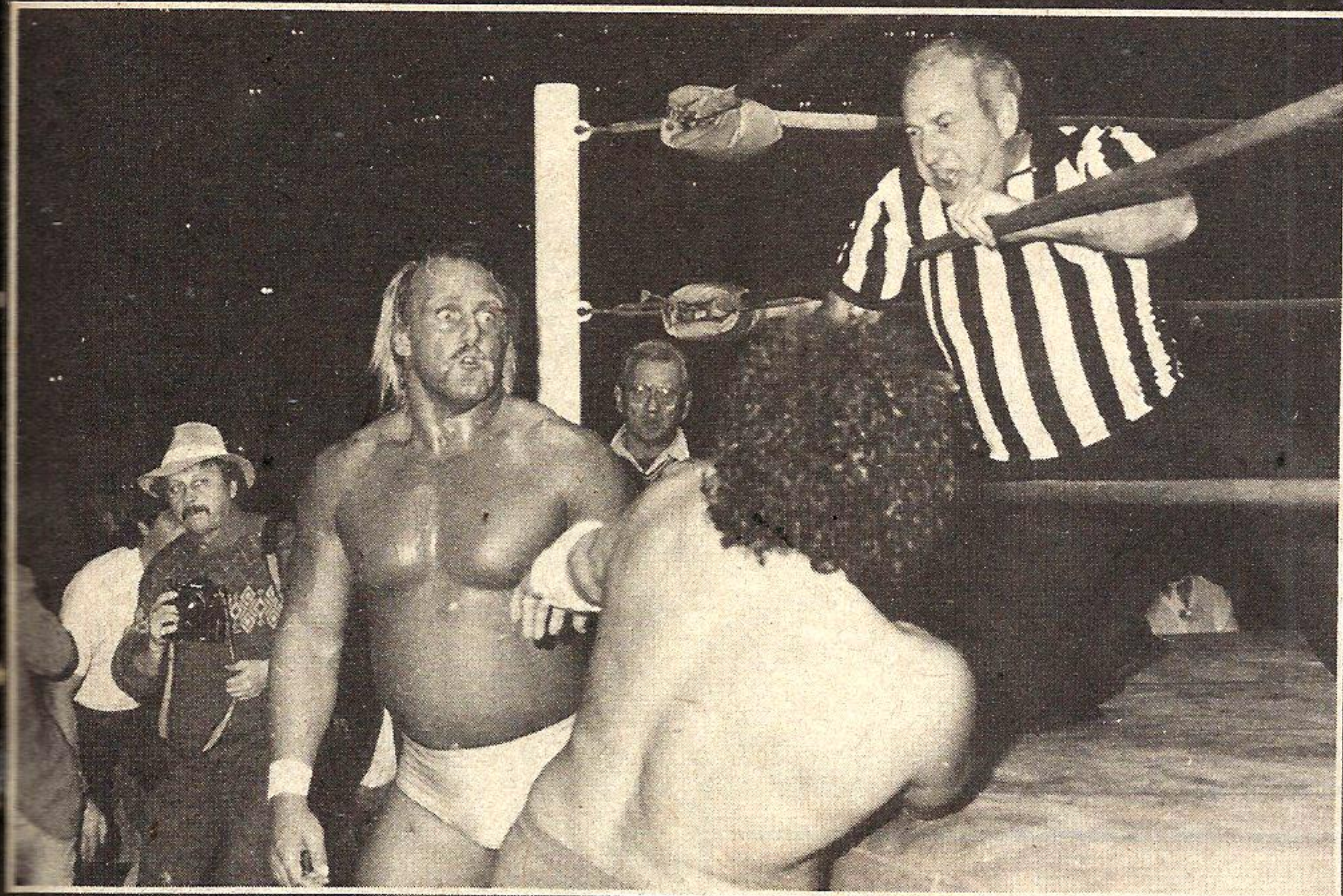
I watch Roddy Piper on television—there is no reason to enumerate. Not once has there emanated from his Pit a genuine spark of bravery, and I finally came to recognize the man as the subversive he is. His deceit, his outright lies, his spinelessness, his weak-mindedness—his endless groveling all together fashion a disgusting personality for our youth to emulate.

Let's not quibble over role models, since all this—Piper's exploitation of the tube and the wrestling fans—is coming to its justifiable end. Piper, with typical bravado, induced his number one stooge, Cowboy Bob Orton, to

(Continued on page 52)

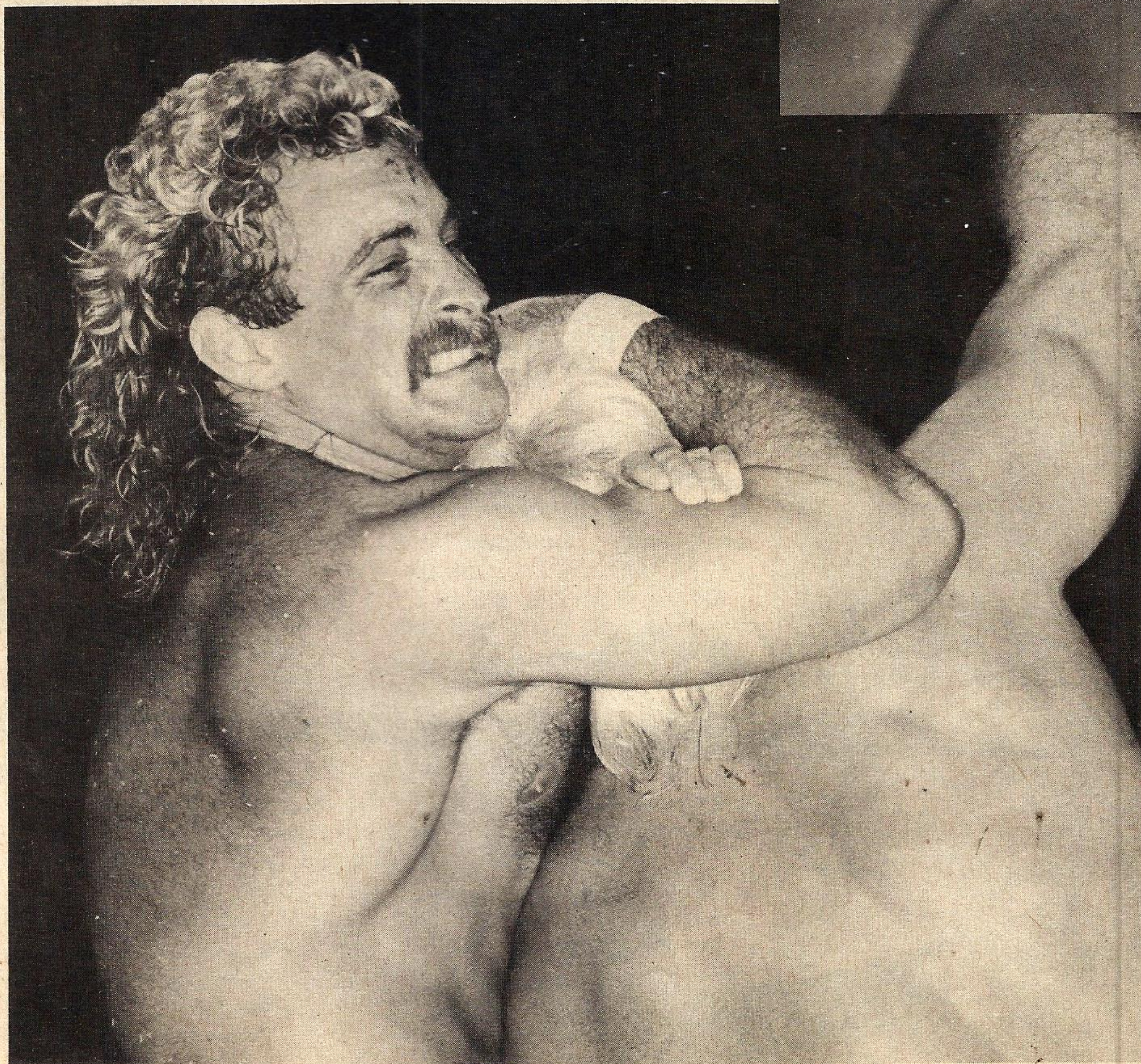
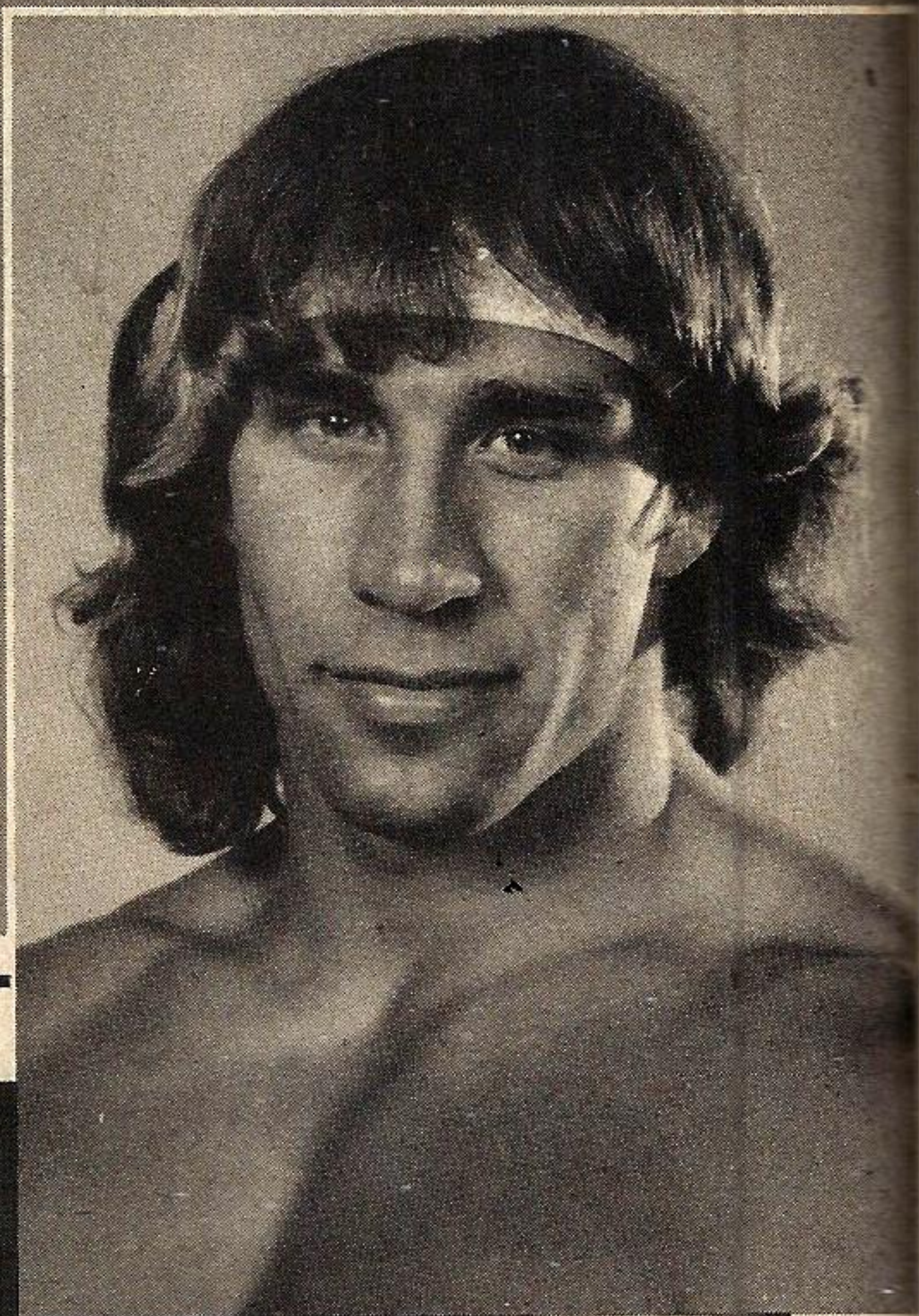


Hogan takes Orton for a walk around the ring (above). The Hulkster hits Boxing Bob with the hardest stare in wrestling (top right). Hogan takes a few blows (far right) before lifting his challenger and depositing him on his back. There isn't much for Piper and Orton to laugh about (right).



Kerry Reveals His Secret:

For the past few years, both Kerry Von Erich and Magnum T.A. have been after the same goal—Ric Flair's NWA title. But now, Kerry is finished wrestling Flair. This may be the best thing that ever happened to Magnum T.A. . . . and the worst thing that ever happened to Ric Flair

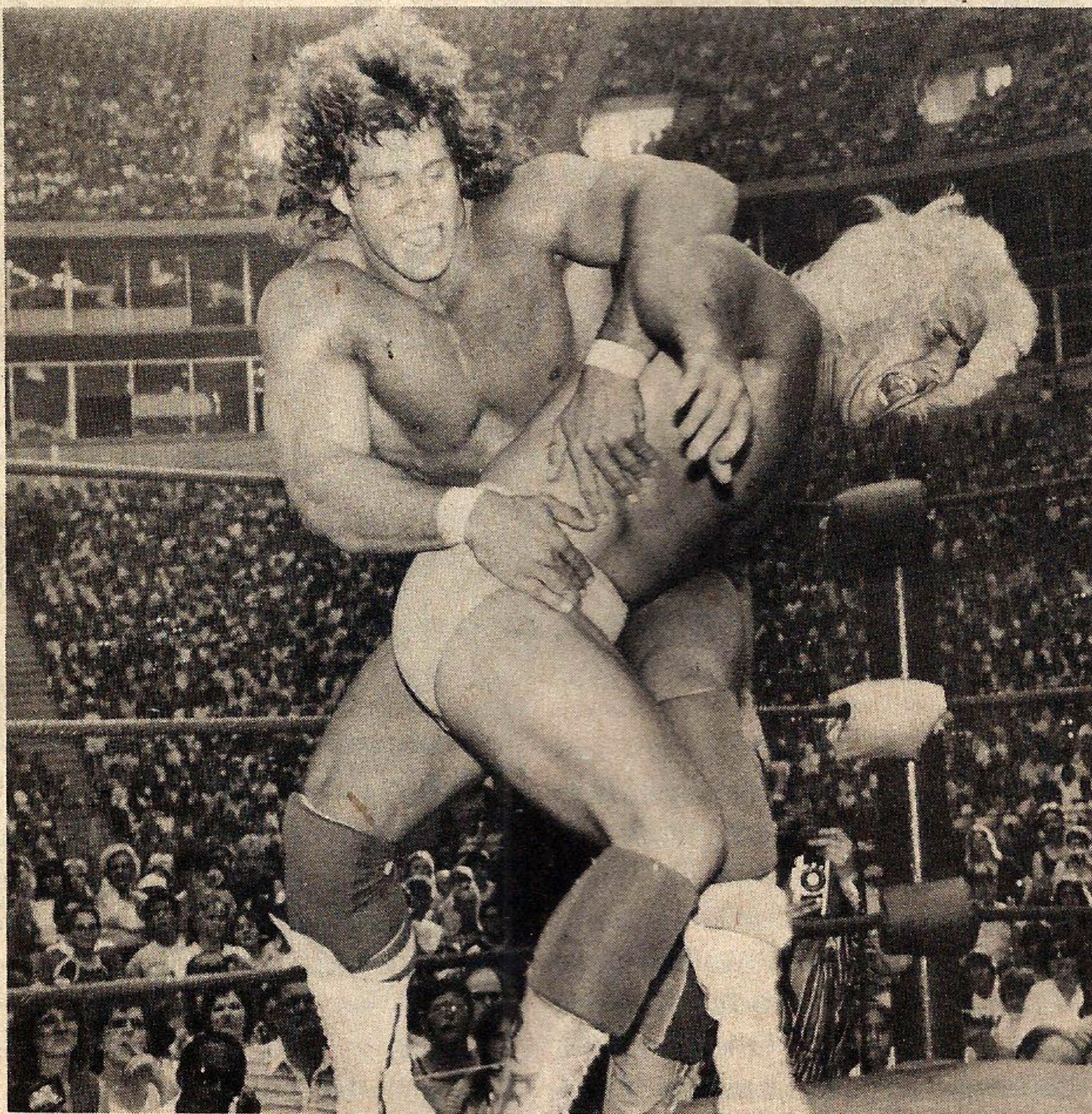


"I'VE TOLD MAGNUM T.A. HOW TO BEAT RIC FLAIR!"

KEN MANTELL ASKED for silence from the dozens of reporters assembled in front of him. As spokesman for World Class Wrestling, Mantell had summoned the reporters to this hastily arranged press conference with the promise of a "bombshell statement." Considering that WCW had recently suffered through such shocking events as the blinding of Chris Adams and the death of Gino Hernandez, the thought of what could possibly be in that "bombshell statement" caused even the most hardened of the writers to look at this press conference with more than a little fear and loathing.

Mantell approached the microphone and prepared to speak. Usually cool and in control, Mantell today looked like a man who hadn't slept in days. The sweat on his upper lip was no doubt caused by the hot television lights, but the effect the few droplets of moisture had on the reporters was to stiffen them into stony, complete silence.

"It's a brief statement, guys," Mantell said. "And I will not answer any questions after I'm through." Mantell waited until the groans from the audience subsided, and then began. "As of today, World Class Wrestling has withdrawn from the National Wrestling Alliance. The disqualification rule that affords an undeserving champion the power to maintain his



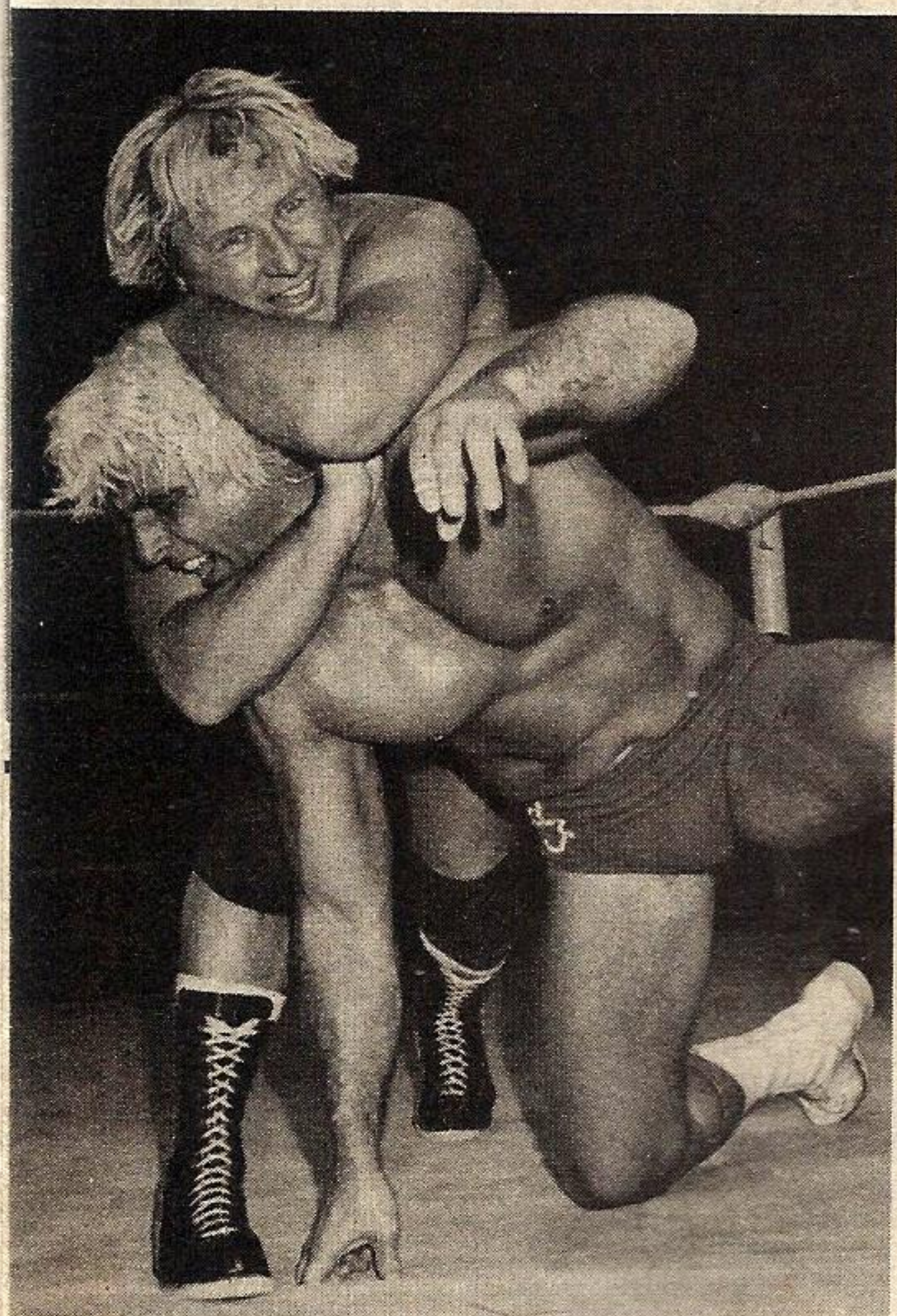
Von Erich applies an abdominal stretch on Flair en route to winning the NWA title in 1984 (above). Now that Von Erich is no longer interested in Flair's title, he feels he can help his buddy Magnum T.A. in his quest to win the championship (opposite page).

status even in defeat is no longer tolerable. Ric Flair will still be recognized as the NWA champion, but wrestlers in this area will no longer be issuing challenges to his title. Rick Rude, the reigning American champion, will from this day on be recognized as the World Class heavyweight champion.

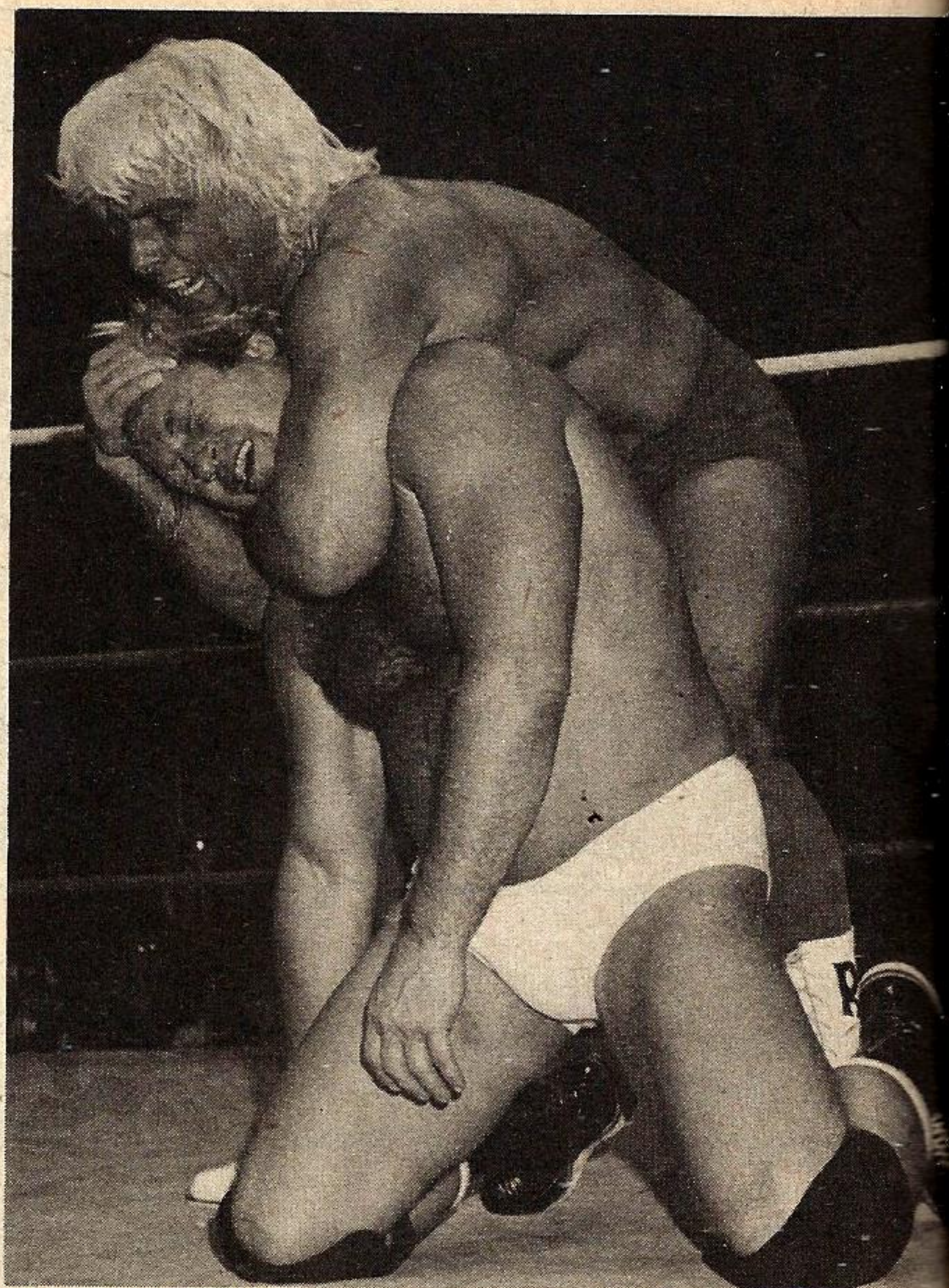
The American title is one of wrestling's most established and oldest titles, going back some 45 years. Considering the current impact WCW has made in Texas and around the world, we feel certain Rude will be accorded the recognition of the world champion he is."

(Continued on page 62)

**Ric Flair vs.
Nick Bockwinkel:**



**FOUR
YEARS
TOO
LATE..
BUT
STILL
GREAT!**



The two ringmasters exchange sleeperholds, Bockwinkel applying pressure to the upper base of the cerebellum (left) and Flair pressuring the temples (above).

One may argue about the merits of declaring Ric Flair the undisputed world champion. But he is the only world champion willing to fight for the right to choose his opponents—not the weakest, mind you, but the most dangerous

THE TRIP NORTH on I-59 through western Minnesota was monotonous, but oddly soothing. Sort of like Siberia with pine trees and ponds sprinkled in the snow. I stopped off in Thief River Falls (one of America's most beautiful town names) to dig up a little dirt about the condition of Krusher Khrushchev's knee. An old high school buddy of his, his only remaining American friend, met me for a working lunch. But that's another story entirely.

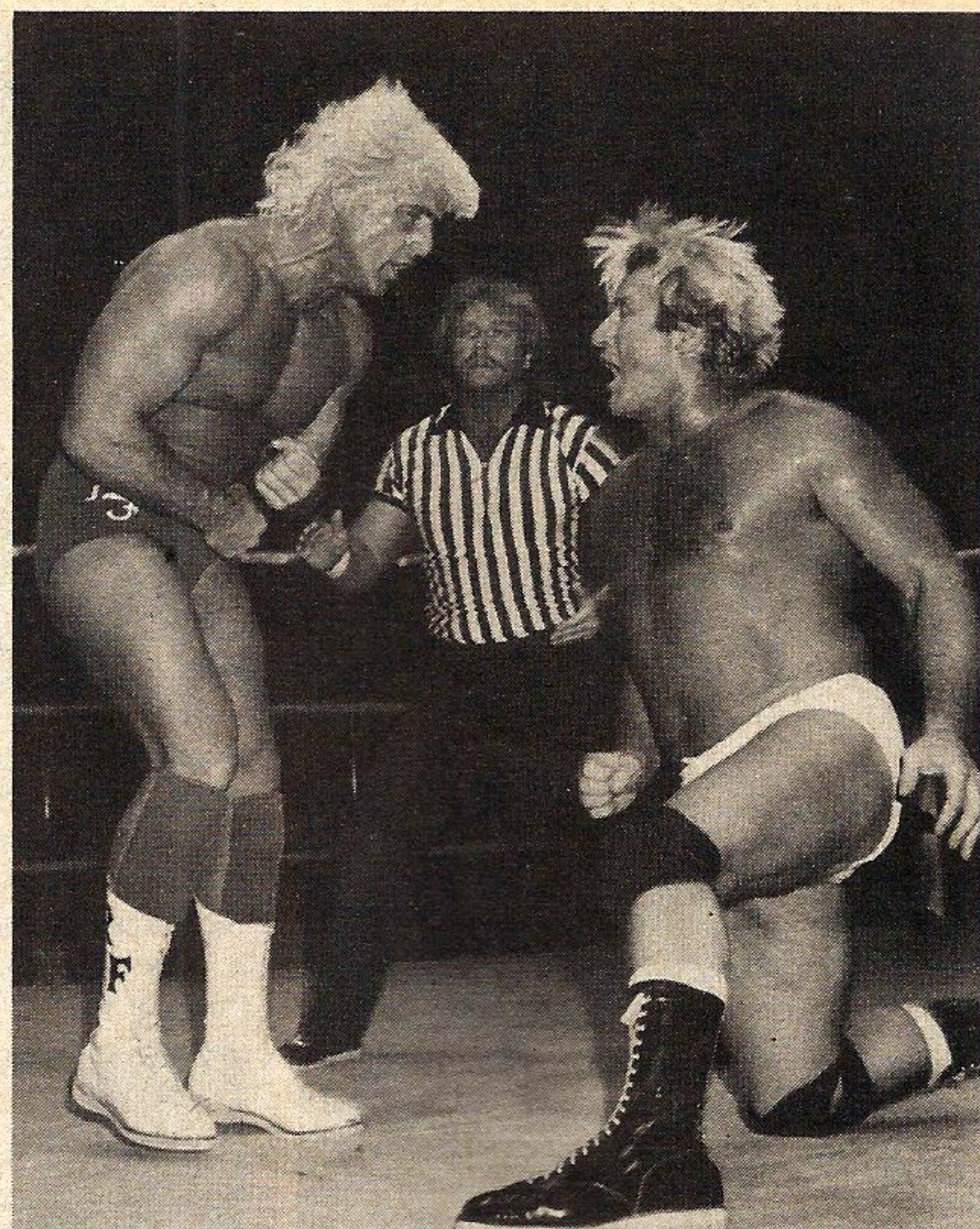
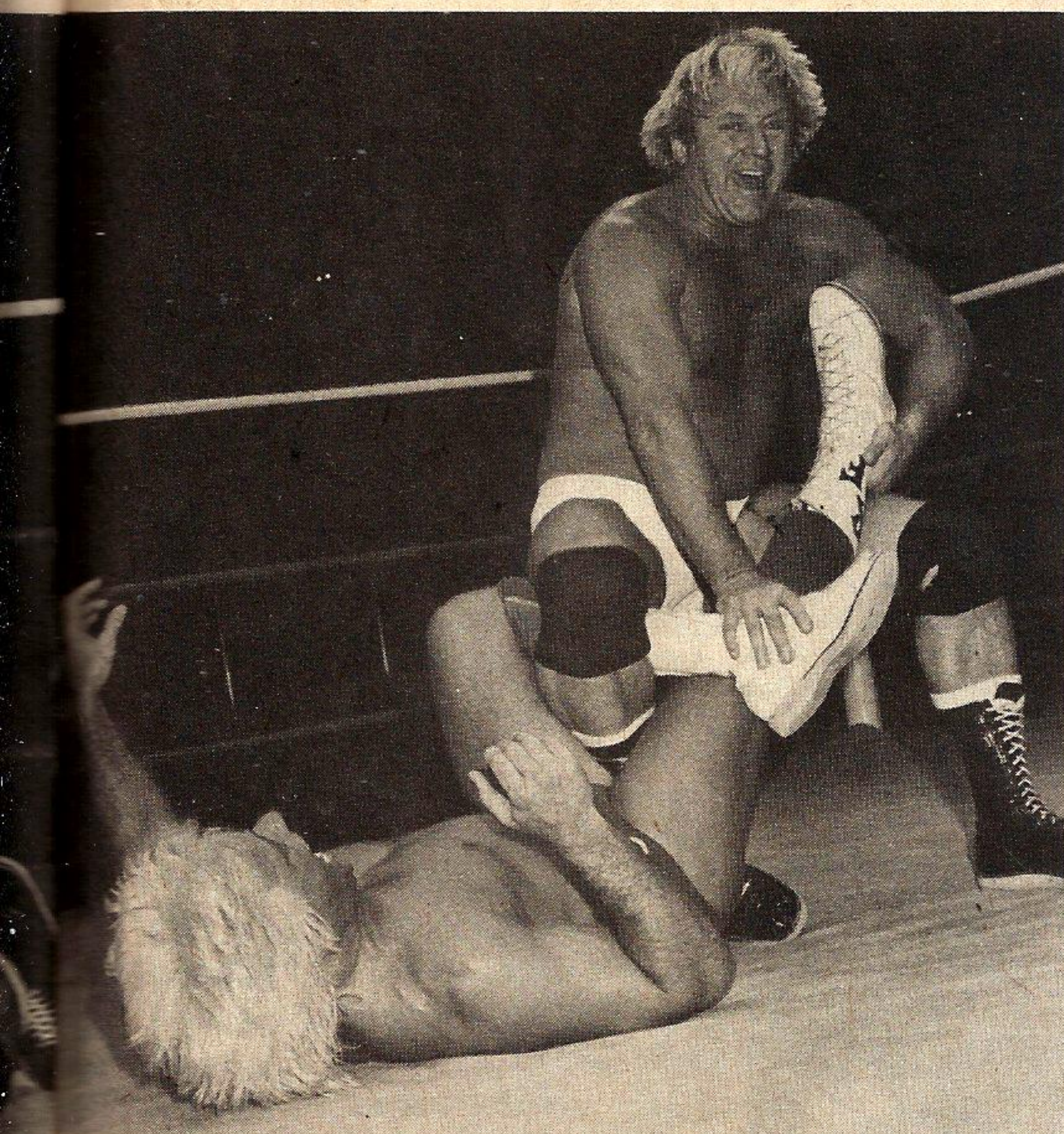
Approaching the Canadian border, I slapped on a Neil Young tape and let it blare through the cracks in the frosty windows. You can't make a hell of a lot of noise in the middle of snowdrifts, but you can

By Jim Schuermann

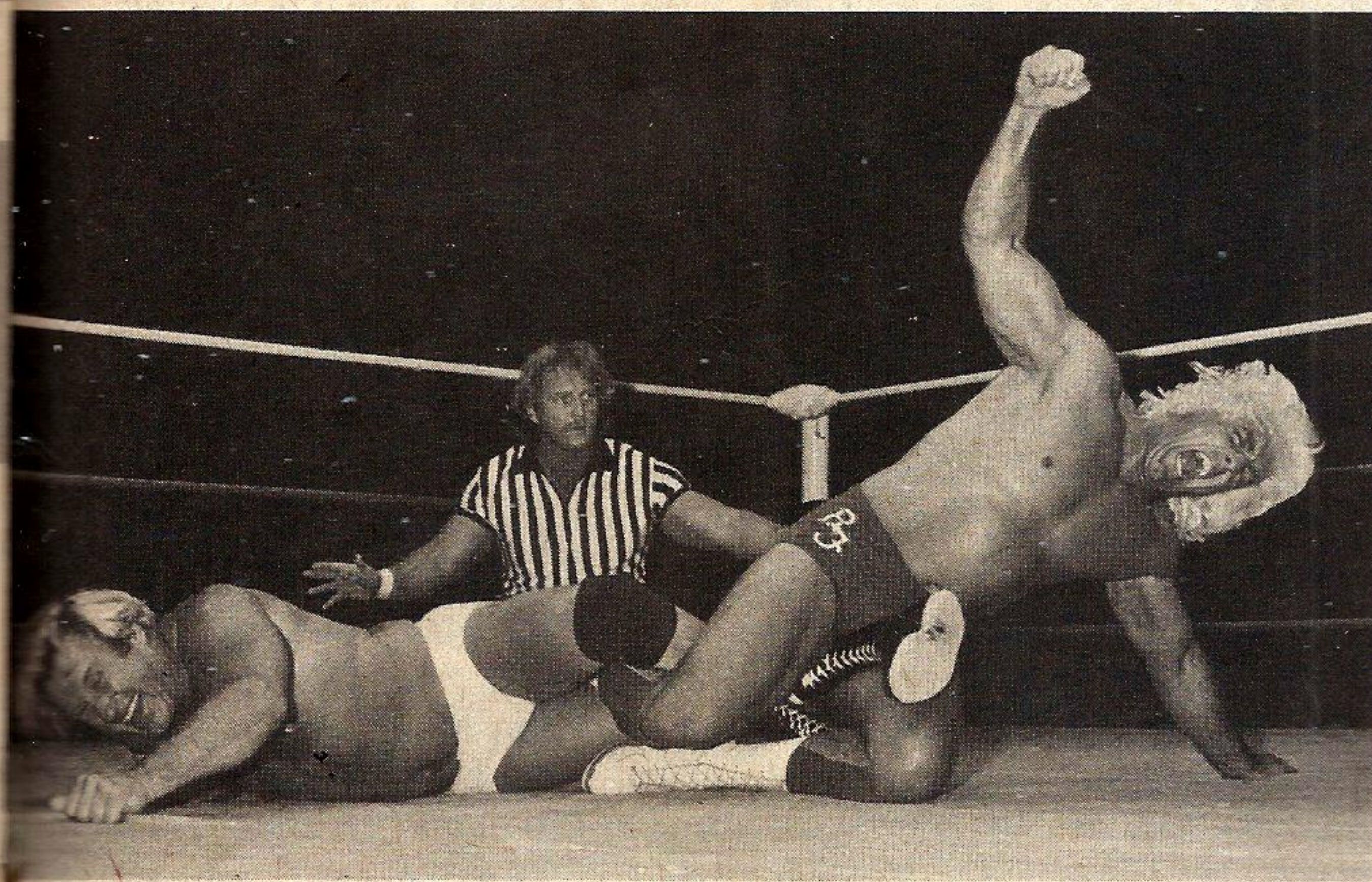
try. The song I wanted to hear, "Don't Be Denied," is an autobiographical tune about what it's like to be a kid with divorced parents who has to move to a new school and gets beaten up on the playground a lot. "We packed up all our bags/And moved on to Winnipeg." Which was exactly where I was going. And why would any sane person want to go to Winnipeg, unless they had to move there with a divorced mother or they were on assignment to do a feature article for a national magazine? I don't like Canada, and neither do most Canadians.

Yeah, I can anticipate the possibility of letters from angry Canadians. But they won't arrive. Who else besides Rick Martel, Iron Mike Sharpe, and a few toothless amateur hockey coaches would defend the honor of Canada? As Mr. Young himself once told an interviewer, the great Canadian Dream is moving to America to pursue the American Dream.

In fact, the very notion of going to a wrestling card in Canada is faintly bizarre. We're talking about a sleepy, pacifistic nation that harbored draft resisters during the Vietnam War and helped negotiate the release of the Iranian hostages. Yet the bloody horror and carnage of professional wrestling has always



Bockwinkel traps Flair in a figure-four leglock (left). Flair, a master at applying the hold, is also a master at escaping it (below). As expected, the match turned into a slugfest (above).



thrived in the mooselands. Actually, some of the greatest matches in wrestling history have taken place in Montreal, Toronto, and other mountietowns. And the circumstances surrounding my Winnipeg trip were enough to make me want to wear a maple-leaf print shirt and warble "O Canada" from the purplest American mountain majesty.

NWA World Champion Ric Flair vs. three-time AWA World champi-

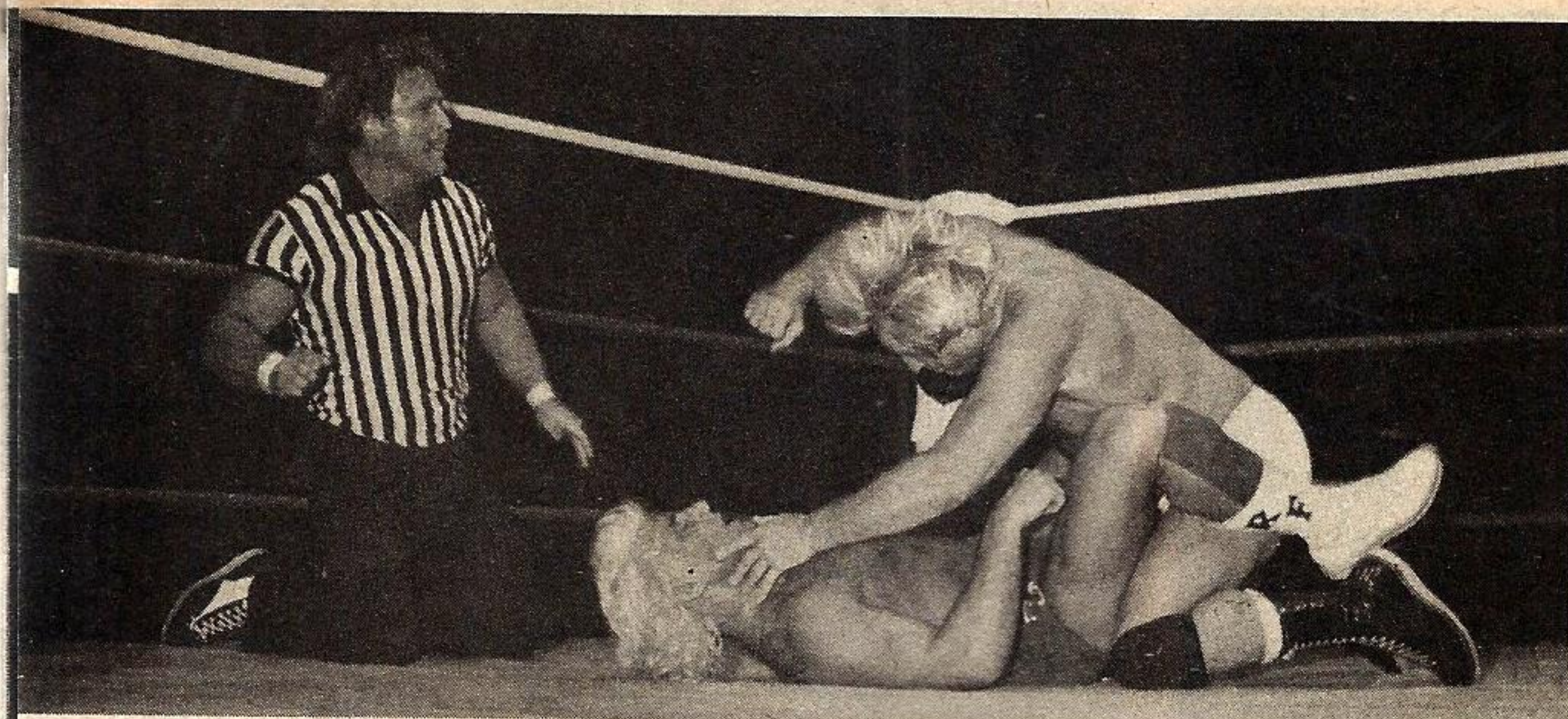
on Nick Bockwinkel. A natural classic. The kind of bout wrestling purists like me drool about in our sleep. *And the only country in the world to sanction the match was Canada!*

Unbelievable. You'd think promoters would be begging to put on a show like that. As it turned out, Ric Flair had to do the begging. Now, a great champion and cultural trendsetter like Ric Flair

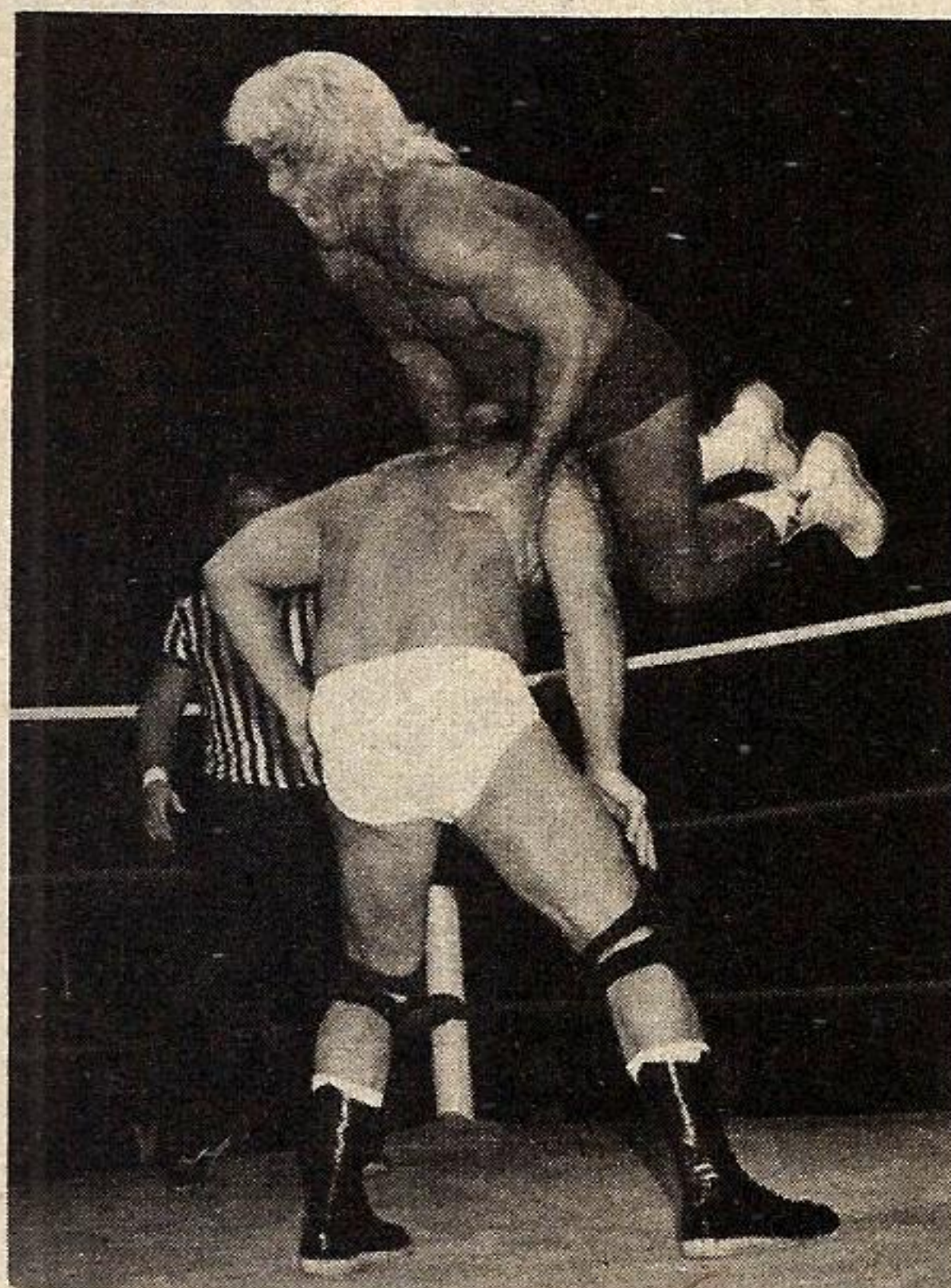
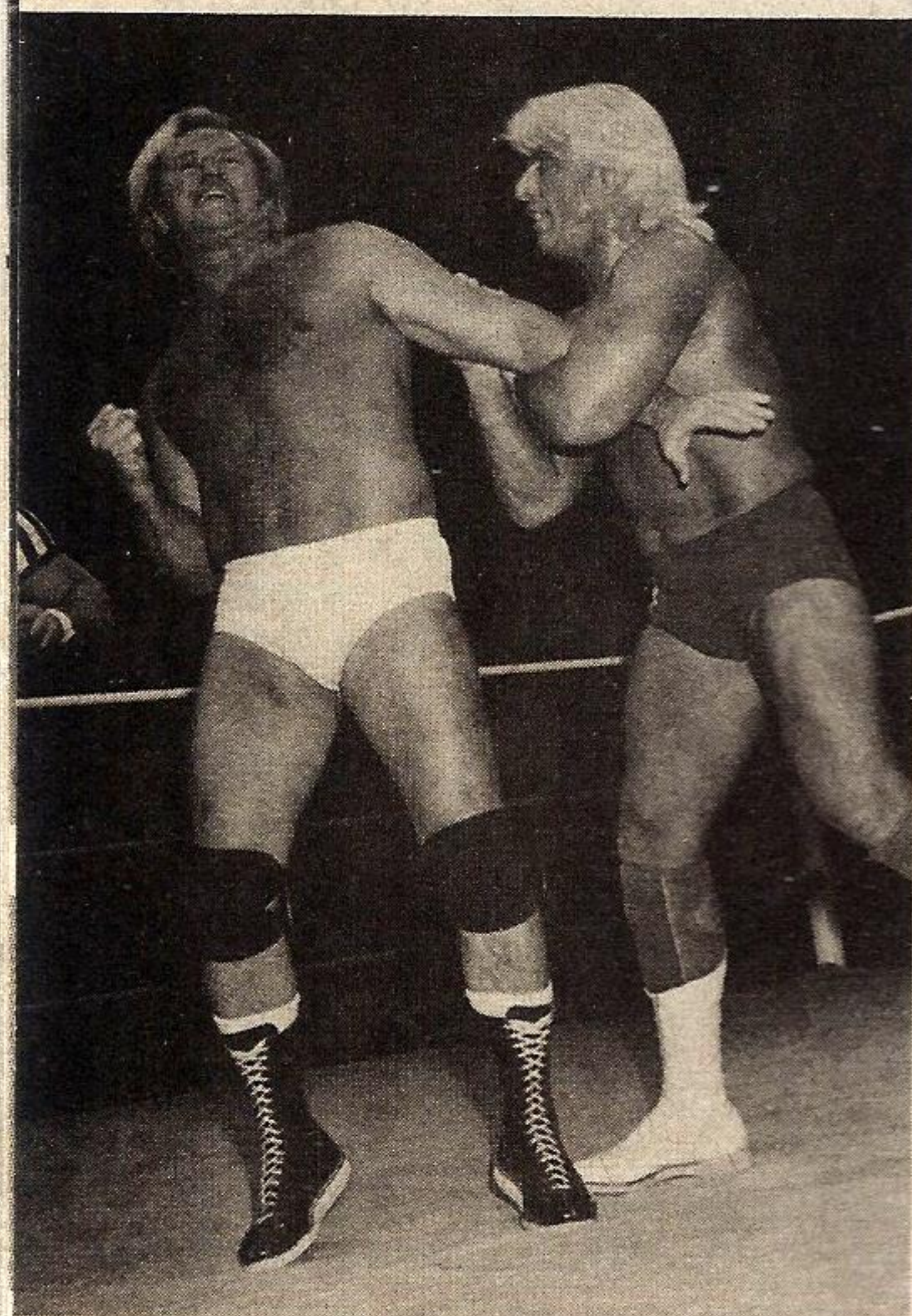
shouldn't have to beg for *anything*, much less a match. But the reality of wrestling economics intrudes on idealistic champions. He could have wrestled Bockwinkel on Space Mountain, but he had to settle for Canada.

See, the line goes that Bockwinkel doesn't sell tickets anymore. Sure, four years ago they were both world champs and it would have been a lucrative battle of the belts. But what have you done for me lately, Nick? Flair vs. Scott Hall? Flair vs. Lex Luger? Flair vs. Kendall Windham? Any promoter in the world would have sanctioned undeserved title shots for those young crowd-pleasers. But Bockwinkel? He just don't put the butts in the balcony, Ric. How 'bout Lance Von Erich? The babes in the front row kiss him all over. Now *there's* a kid who sells tickets!

And Flair told 'em to go shove it. Not literally, of course, but he fought for his principles. He told the promoters a match with Nick would be an acid test for his greatness. Grappling with Nick would re-



Bockwinkel, hoping to become the first man since Gene Kiniski to win both the AWA and NWA titles, pounds away at Flair (above). Nick will punch his way out of Ric's armlock (left). Bockwinkel ducks under a charging Flair, sending him soaring through the air (below).



fine his art. "I am the master of all the great finishing holds," Bockwinkel told us in the April 1984 issue of our sister magazine *Sports Review Wrestling*, and his braggadocio wasn't unfounded. He may be past his prime, but he's still a ringmaster, a tactician of unlimited holds and counters, in the classic mold of Mil Mascaras, Masked Superstar, Harley Race, Danny Hodge, and Al Costello of the original Kangaroos. Flair said he was sick of pummeling pretty boys for the sake of the gate receipts. Uncaring ears pretended to listen. Ric Flair, like every other athlete, is just another business commodity when it comes down to brass tacks.

It wasn't the first time Flair had

to fight for a match. It took the better part of three years for him to arrange a title defense against Billy Robinson. That finally happened in Chicago last autumn, but it took him that long to wheedle promoters into booking a non-commercial match. He demanded a scientific match with the legendary grappler who had dropped from the ratings due to inactivity and managerial work. "Billy Robinson doesn't deserve a title match," Flair heard. "Billy Robinson *always* deserves a title match," Flair responded. Nature Boy craves challenges. He doesn't want to pretend to be a champion, he wants to prove it, by whupping the craftiest men.

Flair and Bockwinkel finally

found a venue. Winnipeg. Ugh. But God bless Canadian courage. And I sat there open-mouthed at ringside, as awestruck as the other fans. I witnessed the critical sleeperhold variations. Both men squeezed the carotid artery to stanch the blood flow to the brain; but Bockwinkel applied opposite-hand pressure on the upper base of the cerebellum whereas Flair used the more traditional approach of crushing the temples with the right hand.

Both holds would have incapacitated lesser opponents. But the two gallant warriors battled on, trading figure-four leglocks. Bockwinkel stunned Flair by reversing his figure-four leglock and slapping on his own. However, it took him many terribly excruciating minutes to do so, and Bockwinkel could not sustain the leg strength to maintain leverage.

The war of grace ended past the 45-minute mark, with a double-disqualification. The two gladiators had tested themselves, and settled for bloodlust. But that was understandable. A match conducted at such a furious, breathlessly violent pace could not be expected to end with a gallant handshake. But Ric Flair, a man ordinarily devoured by pressure, looked radiant afterward. Like the fans, and like Bockwinkel, he had learned things about himself and about his sport.

Driving back over the border, the final verse of "Don't Be Denied" came back to me in a rush. *All that glitters isn't gold/That's the story, so I'm told/But I'm a pauper in a naked disguise/A millionaire through a businessman's eyes.* Ric Flair is several times over a millionaire. But like fellow millionaire Neil Young, who has never released an album that sounded remotely like the previous one, he purposefully defies expectations. Wrestling is his art, and he won't compromise that for profit-conscious agents or promoters. He will try to be the greatest champion in NWA history on his own terms. □

Lugar applies excruciating pressure on Jesse Barr's ribs.



THE LEX LUGAR LEGEND GROWS!

Lex Lugar's courage didn't evolve because of his size. Like all great champions, his bravery was inbred, instinctual; the fiber of legends

CHICAGO, 1968

THE BOY ENJOYED cutting through the large university, testing his fantasies on the large football practice field, colliding

against the tackling dummies with unusual force for a young teenager. He would dart between the cavernous aisles of the bookstore, avoiding the heavy, mysterious texts, foraging instead amongst the colorful T-shirts and insignia-

adorned pennants.

His favorite spot was the college piazza. Located at the crest of a knoll, it was a placid acre where students, teachers, musicians, locals, and foreigners adjoined each other with swells of gossip, jokes, trends. Nursing a soda pop, the boy darted around

tables stealing bits of conversation, spats of style. Later, in the fantasy of his room, he would caricature the collegiate swagger in pursuit of a red-haired coed he had developed a mad crush on.

Today the piazza was blocked. Helmeted policemen on horseback forced students behind large wooden barricades. The boy was terrified of policemen ever since one caught him pocketing a pack of gum from a candy store and gave him a whack only a father should.

This boy was Lex Lugar, five years removed from a growth spurt that would soon intimidate his peers. Now, the small boy was able to use a tree for cover, and watched as heavily armed cops

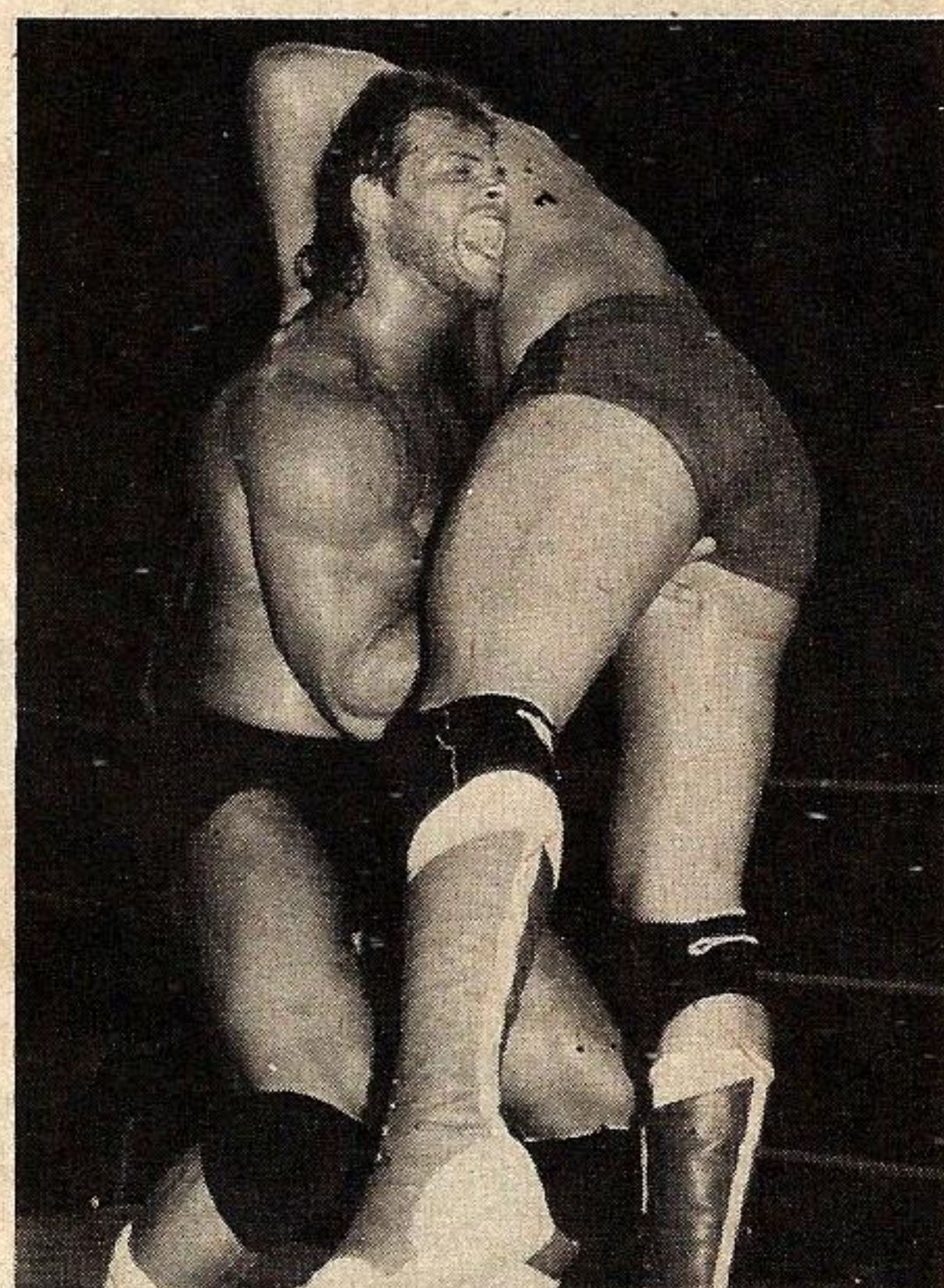
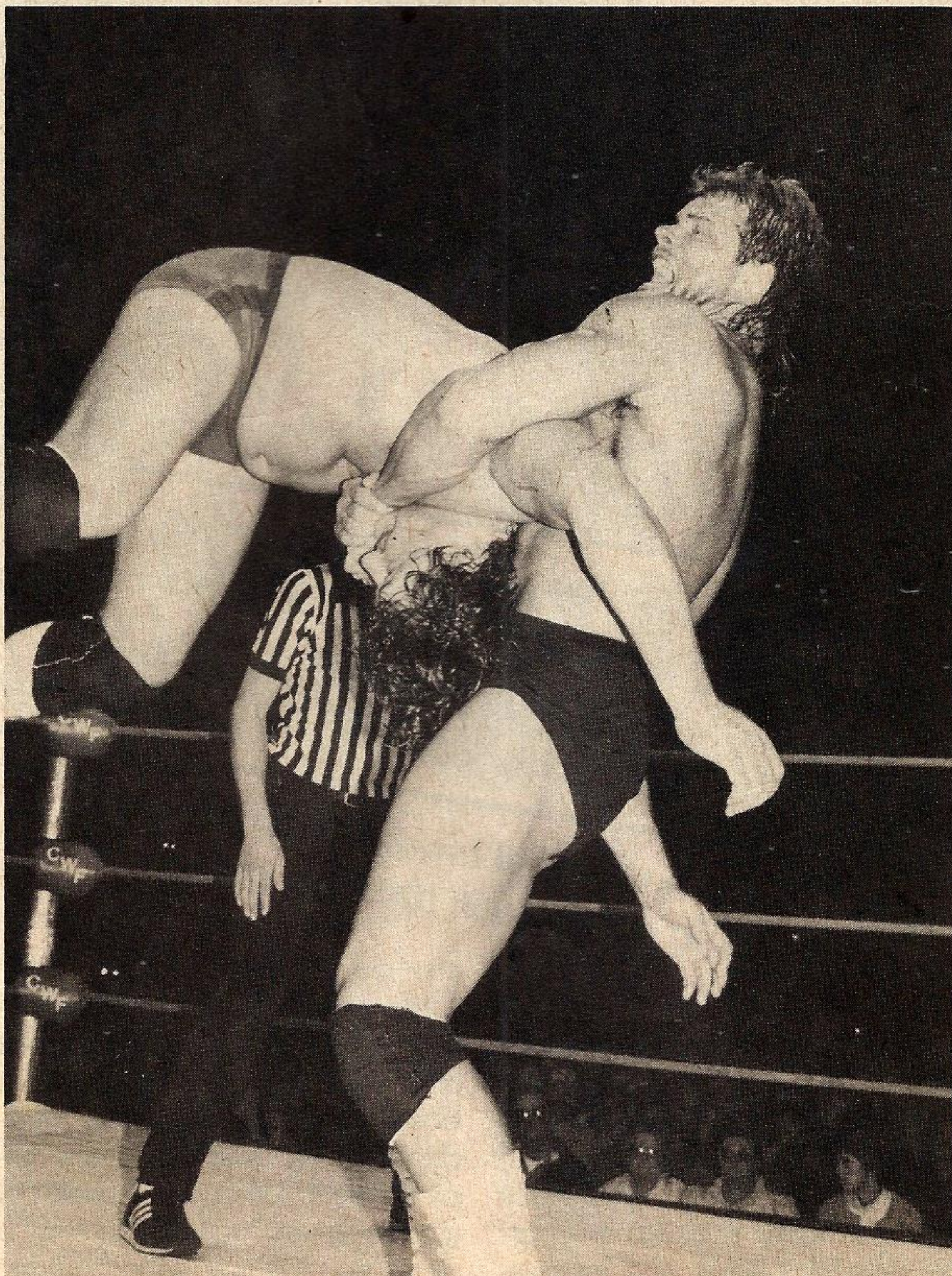
sent rivulets of running, frightened students over the lawn area, into the woods and parking lot. Some students defended their ground, hurling rocks, bottles, and slogans at the officers. The officers met them with stampeding hooves and tear gas.

The red-haired girl was caught between a violent crossfire of billy clubs, mace, and stones. A policeman jumped off his mount and yanked the girl to her feet, screaming for her to move. She stood, paralyzed not in defiance, but in terror. The policeman raised his stick to the girl when Lugar shot from behind his tree, hurling himself at the officer's knees. Years later such a display would disable four men; this day it

caused the cop to shift his stick, his hate.

The cop picked Lugar up by his neck and raised his arm again. Lugar ducked the cop's savage blow and, grabbing the red-haired girl, raced into the crowd. They were swept up in a new wave of rioting—he and the girl were separated—and he ran dizzily home.

It wasn't till hours later that television brought the horror of the experience home to him. He trem-

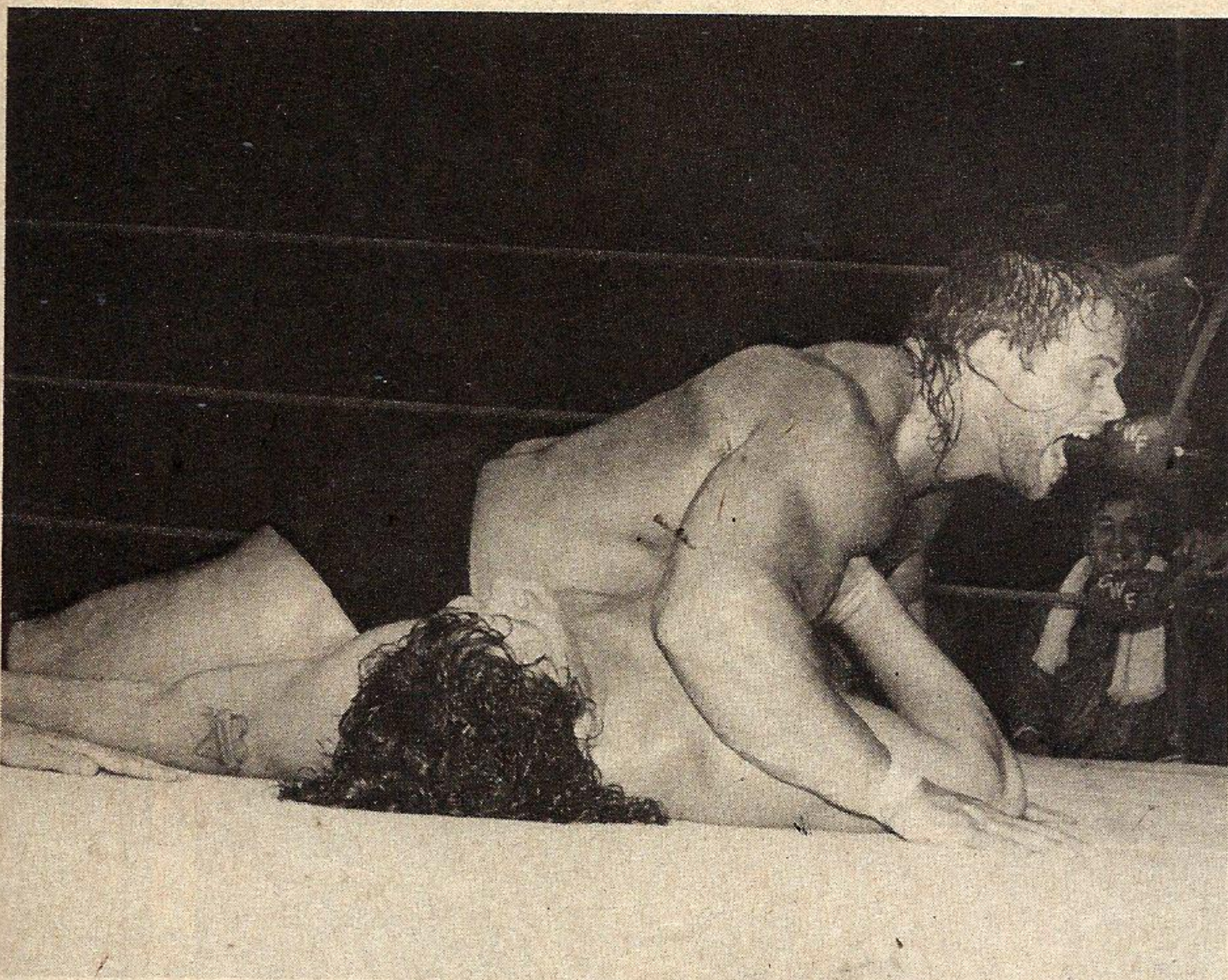


Lugar's inexperience shows at various points, but the tools of greatness are obvious. Content to choke Barr, Lex wastes an opportunity to bring him over and down (left). Lugar should have lifted Barr after throwing him into the ropes where he could have been assisted by Jesse's momentum (above).

bled as boys not yet 20 were gassed, broken, and battered by Chicago's finest.

Lugar recounted the childhood tale to the battery of reporters drawn to his dressing room side. Lugar was disjointedly expansive, talkative. He could indulge such moods. Minutes earlier, he had pinned Jesse Barr to capture the Southern title.

"I'll never forget that day," Lugar, his legs propped comfortably on the training table, told the scribbling reporters. "I was never scared. I dreamed about rescuing that girl so many times that when it happened it seemed like the most natural thing in the world."



With his trainer, Hiro Matsuda, observing from ringside, Luger goes for a bodypress against Barr. Barr will easily push off the 280-pounder.

"Did you ever see her again?" Luger was asked.

"No, nope. Never again. They shut down the campus for a week. Then my family and I went to visit relatives in Minnesota. When I got back to school, she wasn't there. I looked all over for her. I'm sure she got scared by all the rioting—she wasn't a yippie or hippie or anything from what I can remember. She probably transferred schools.

Luger turned to more relevant topics. "Every success I enjoy in the ring I trace back to that day. When that cop looked me in the eye, he wanted to kill me. I hadn't done him wrong, never called him no name, couldn't possibly hurt him. But he was in the hate mode. He had a girl and a little kid helpless on the ground and he treated us like we were dangerous, armed criminals.

"The hate mode. I had never backed away from a fight, but I never looked for one either. But the look in the cop's eyes was tantalizing. It seduced me. Pure, red-eyed, passionate hate. There was power in that hate. The power to destroy, the ability to

control."

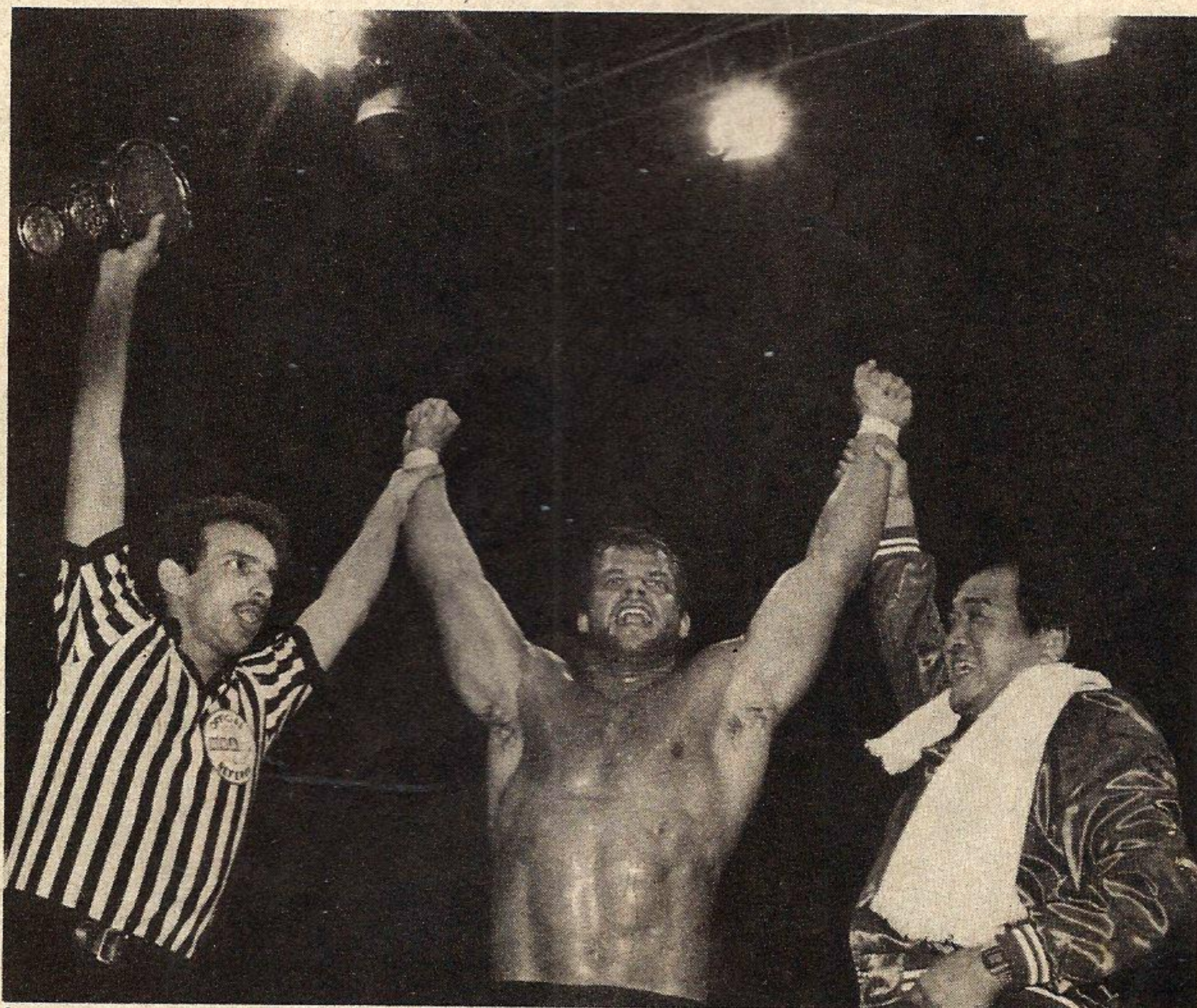
Luger applied the hate mode first to football, which he played professionally for several years. "Guys across the line wouldn't look into my eyes. I'd hypnotize 'em with hate. I'd paralyze them before the ball would snap. After that it'd be easy.

"Kevin Sullivan noticed my eyes and approached me when I first got to Florida. He said Satan and I had exchanged glances. I told him to take his voodoo crap and take a hike. But I listened when Hiro Matsuda spoke."

Matsuda captured Luger's attention with his fascinating display of Oriental mind technique. Luger marveled at Matsuda's self-discipline as Matsuda alternately walked over burning coals, withstood sub-freezing temperatures, and stuck himself with needles.

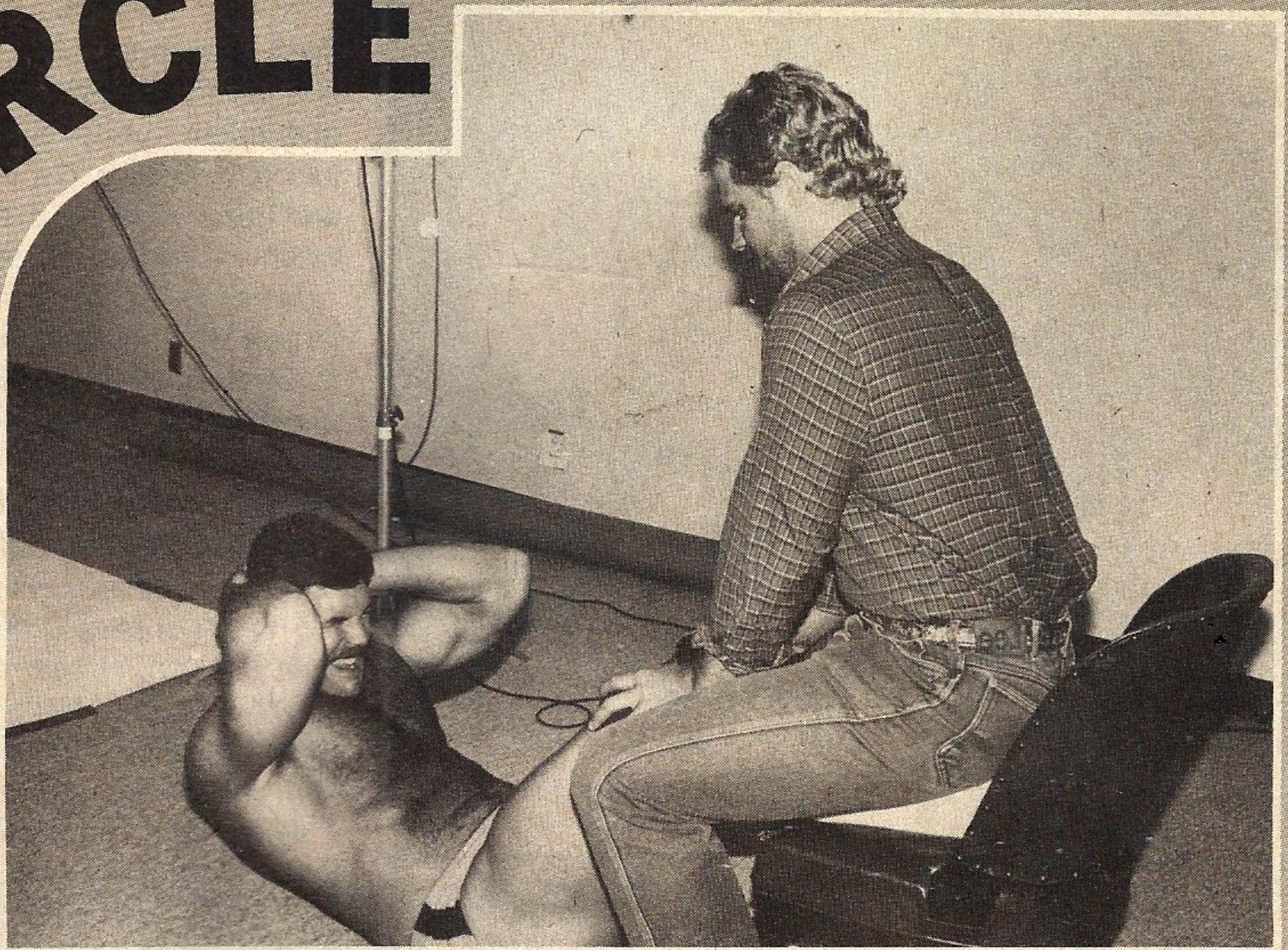
"For most people hate is a random emotion," Luger explains. "It controls them. With Matsuda's help, I control it. It's like having a gun, it's so damn powerful."

Jesse Barr knows all about Lex Luger's smoking gun. Barr, who had taken Luger's title nearly a month earlier, was pinned by the growing legend inside of 15 minutes. At 6'5", 280 pounds of steel and sinew, boasting a willpower that denies pain, a mind capable of twisting iron, and a hate as lethal as any foreign object, Lex Luger's future as a wrestling legend seems secure. □

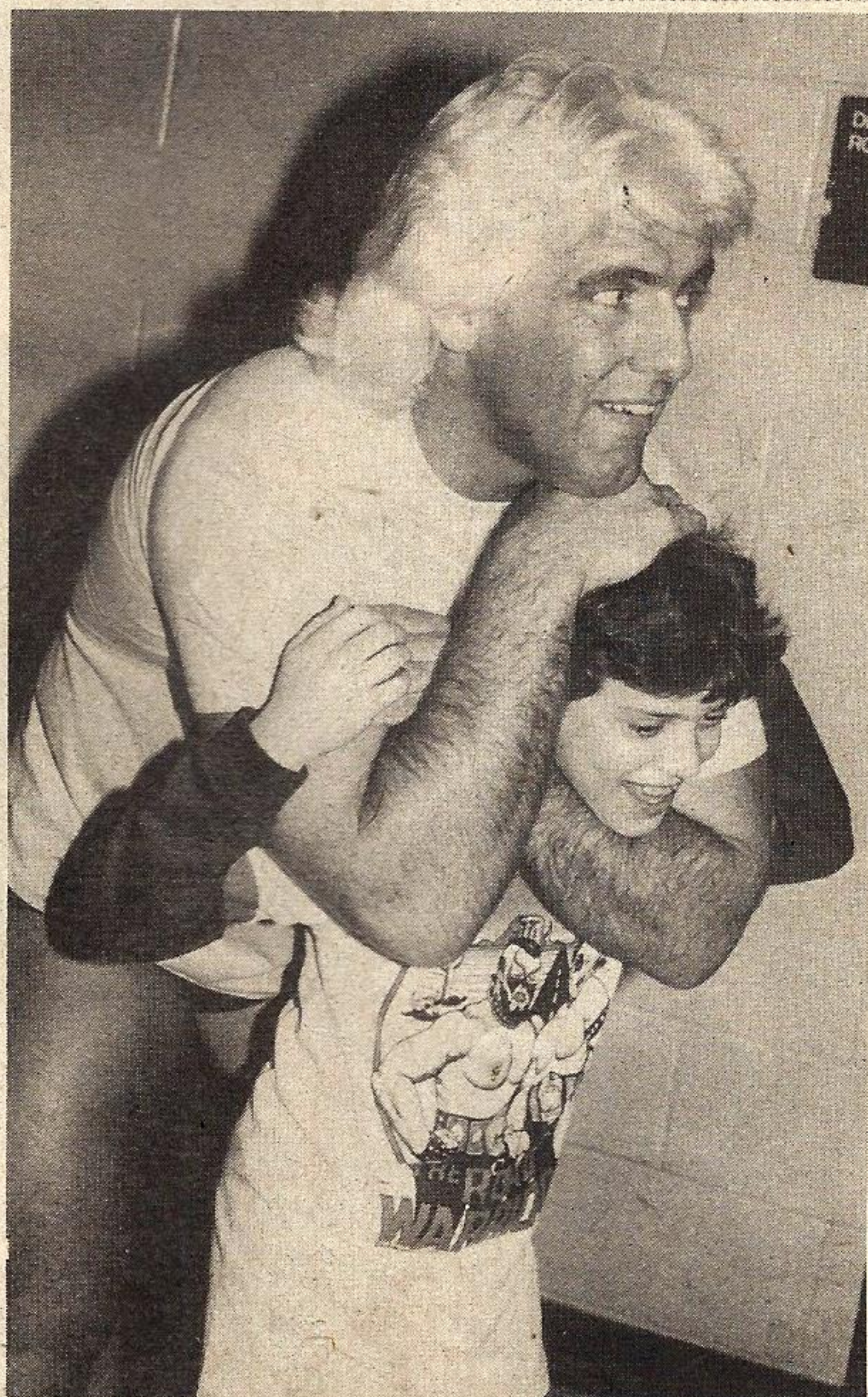


Luger showed a lot to Matsuda and the wrestling community by reclaiming the Southern title after losing it to Barr a month earlier.

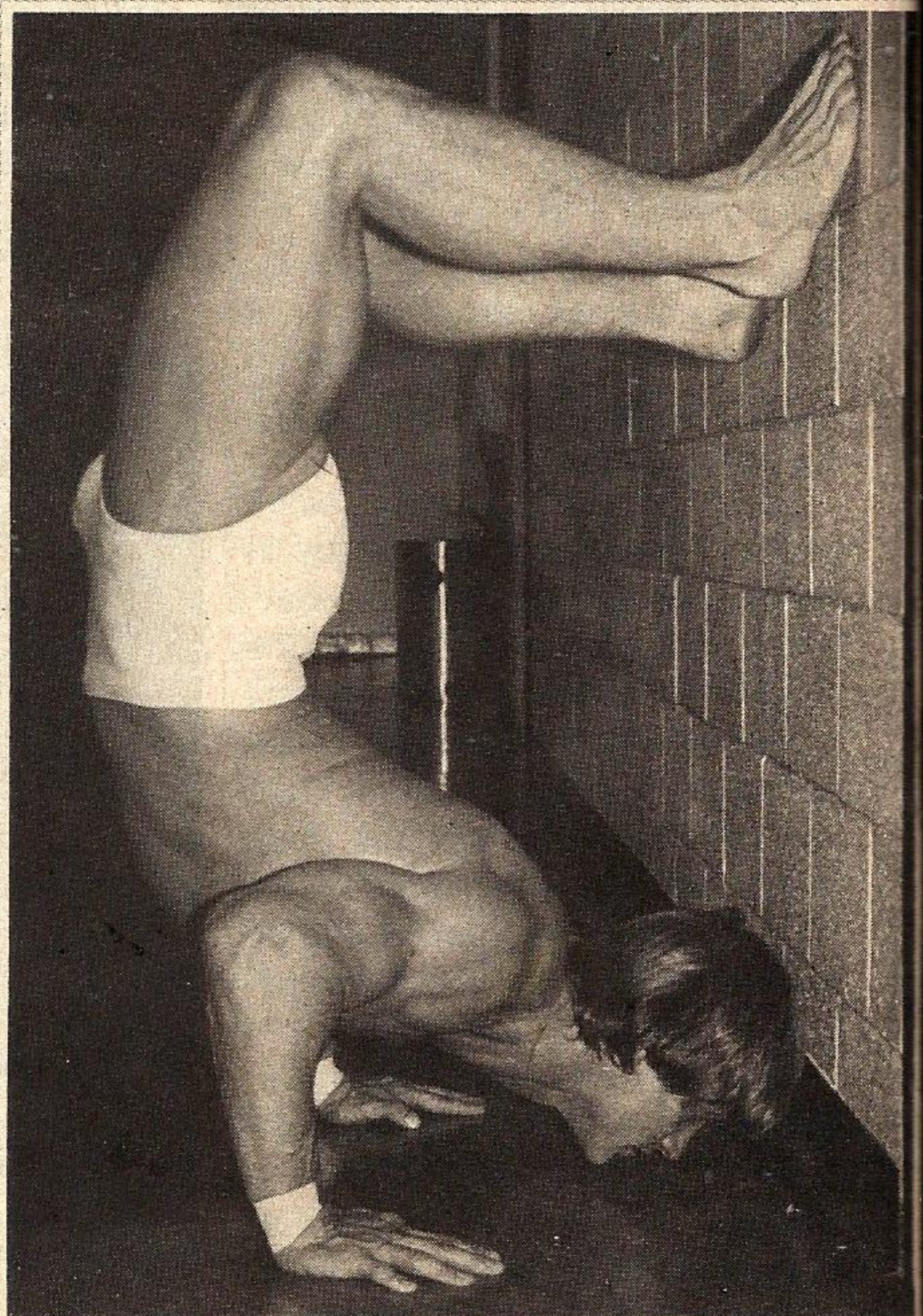
BEYOND THE SQUARED CIRCLE



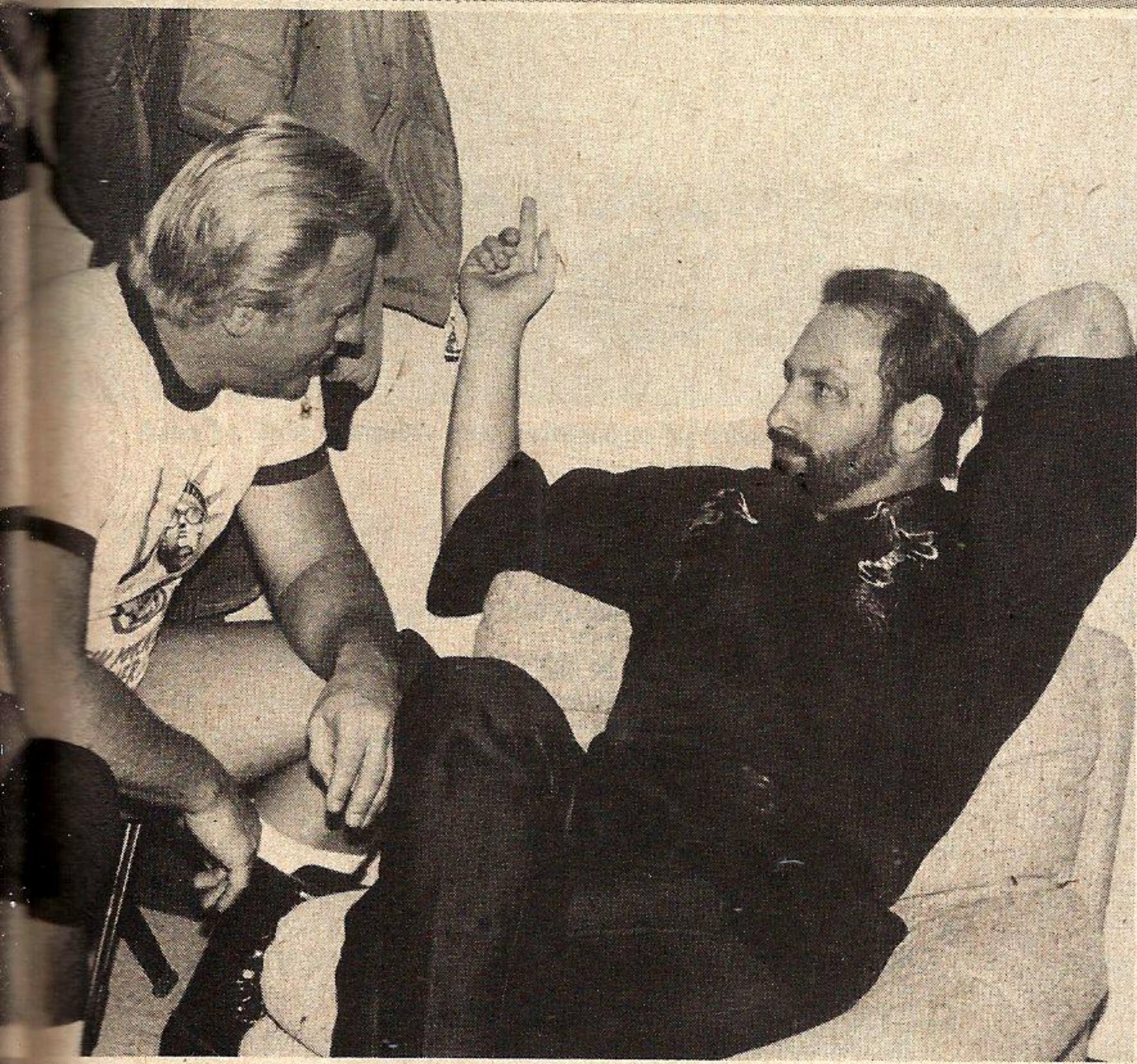
Assisted by Curt Hennig, Scott Hall pumps his abdominal muscles before posing for a photo session at our New York office. That evening, Hennig and Hall would successfully defend the AWA tag team championship against The Long Riders in The Meadowlands.



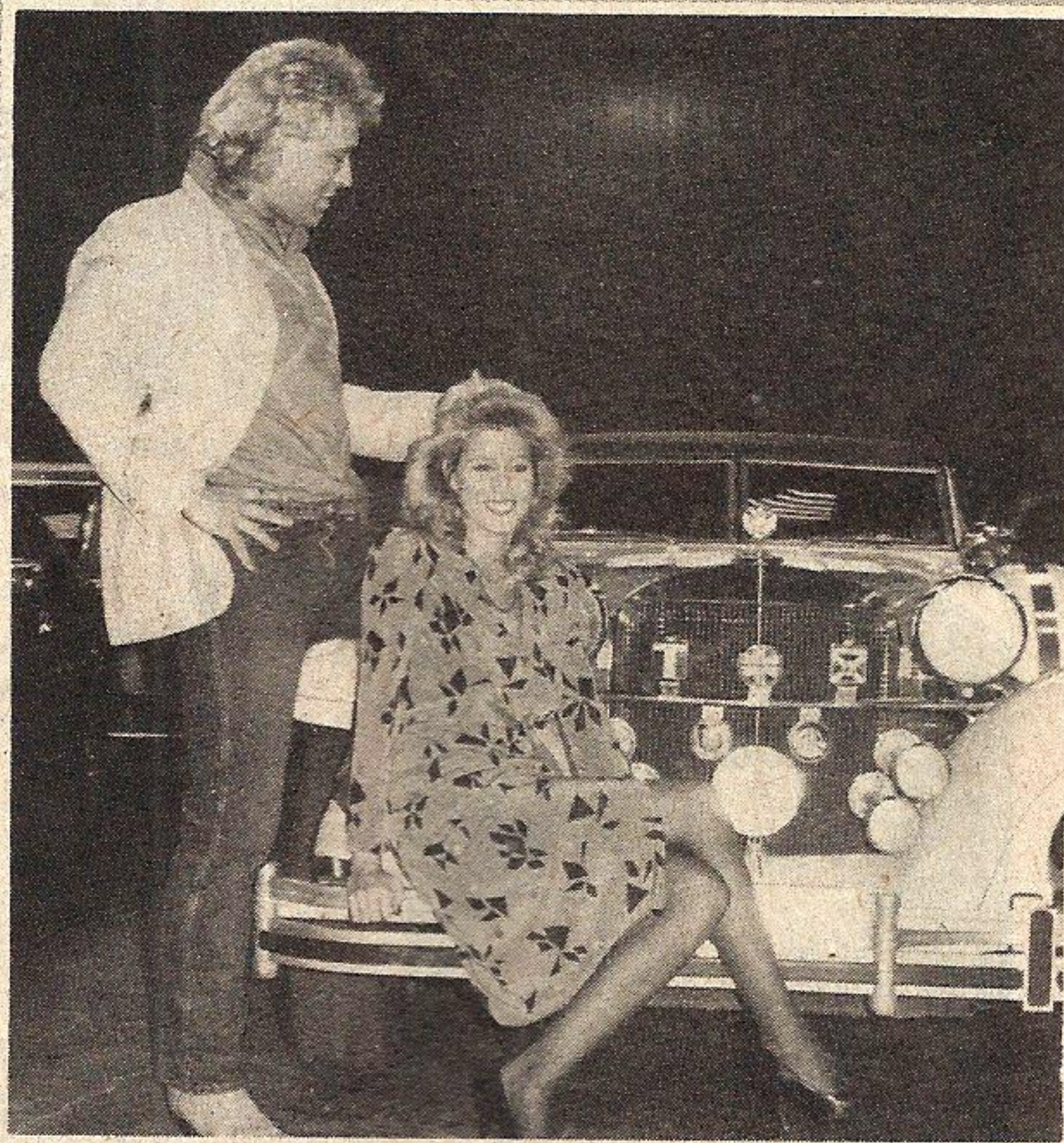
Ric Flair apparently doesn't believe in lullabies or goodnight stories. The victim of his play sleeperhold is Jeff Einhorn, the son of Chicago White Sox owner Eddie Einhorn.



Kevin Von Erich is not a conventional wrestler, so he can't be expected to warm up for a match in a conventional way. Among other unique exercises, Kevin does a set of handstand pushups.



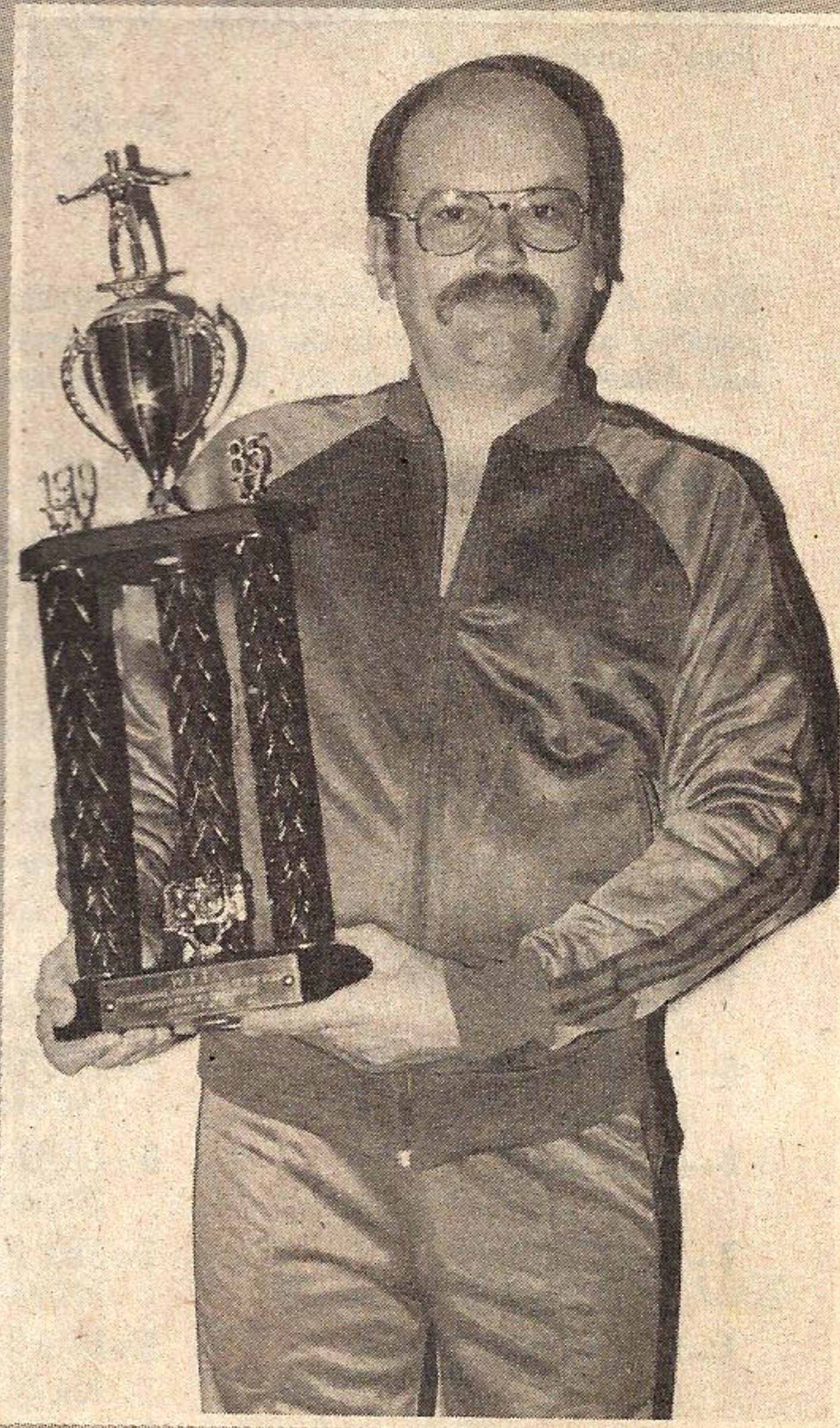
Left: Two of wrestling's most brilliant minds come together when Nick Bockwinkel and Paul Ellering converse.



Above: "If you want the car, honey, it's yours," John Tatum tells Missy Hyatt. Did anyone tell Tatum an Excalibur sells for around \$50,000?



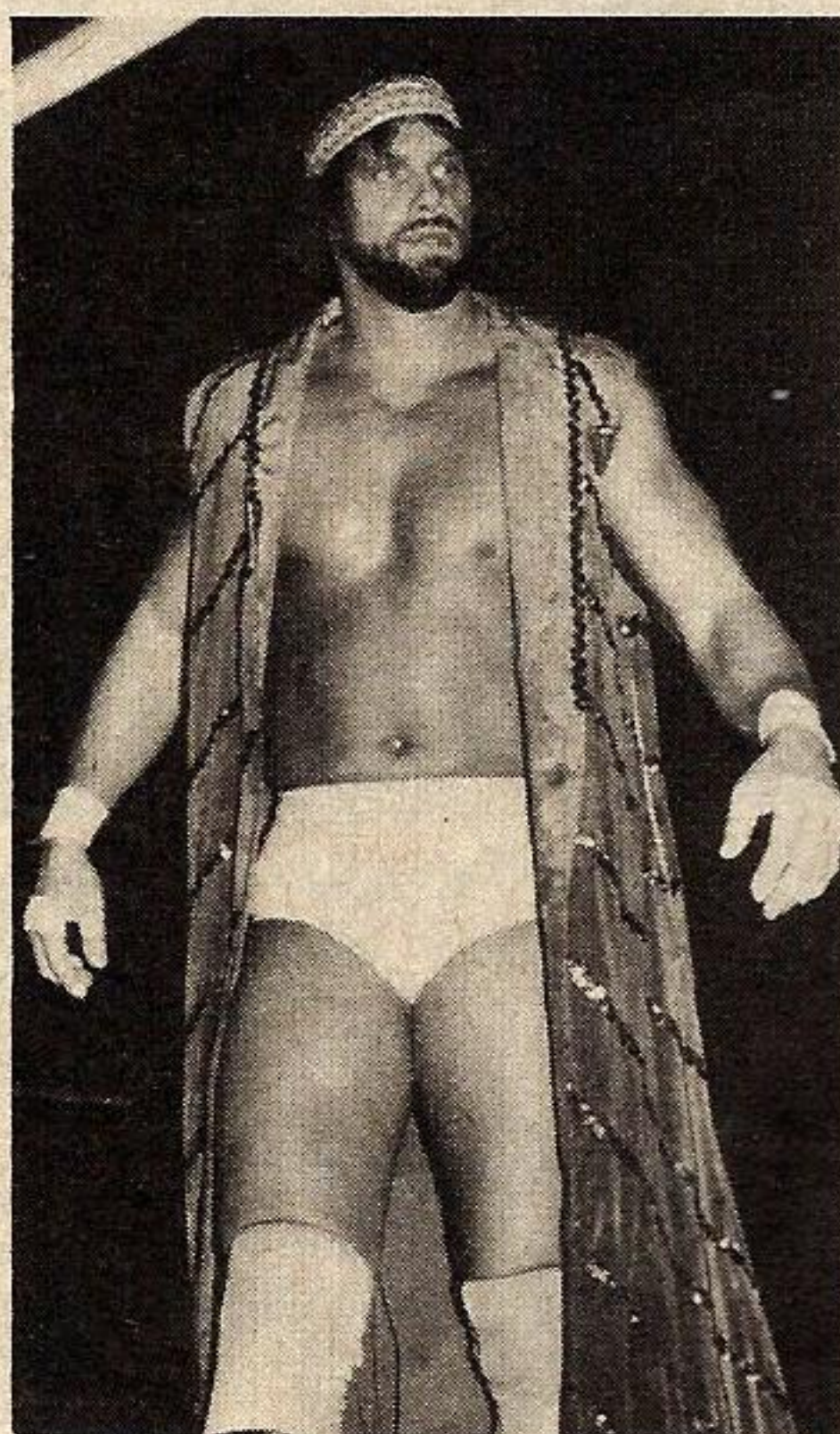
Below: Terrence Machalek, who shoots pictures for *The Wrestler* in Winnipeg, was named 1985 Photographer of the Year by the Wrestling Fans International Association.



Left: Eddie Gilbert, who is simultaneously wrestling and managing in the Mid-South, weds Terrie Dykes in Lexington, Tennessee.

OFF WRESTLIN

Top 10 and Tag Team ratings are based on won-lost records for the past month, quality of opposition, and inherent skill of each wrestler or team. These ratings are compiled by the magazine's editorial board.



Randy Savage

TOP 10

- 1—**RIC FLAIR**
NWA World champion
243, Minneapolis, MN
- 2—**HULK HOGAN**
WWF World champion
302, Venice Beach, CA
- 3—**STAN HANSEN**
AWA World champion
322, Borger, TX
- 4—**MAGNUM T.A.**
U.S. champion
245, Chesapeake, VA
- 5—**RANDY SAVAGE**
Intercontinental champion
245, Sarasota, FL
- 6—**DUSTY RHODES**
National champion
302, Austin, TX
- 7—**KERRY VON ERICH**
No. 1 contender: World Class title
260, Denton, TX
- 8—**NIKITA KOLOFF**
No. 4 contender: NWA title
275, Moscow, Russia
- 9—**RICK RUDE**
World Class champion
246, Robbinsdale, MN
- 10—**BRUISER BRODY**
No. 4 contender: AWA title
284, Albuquerque, NM

TAG TEAMS

- 1—**THE ROAD WARRIORS**
No. 1 contenders to AWA and NWA World tag team titles
Combined weight: 567 pounds
- 2—**DENNIS CONDREY & BOBBY EATON**
NWA World tag team champions
Combined weight: 472 pounds
- 3—**GREG VALENTINE & BRUTUS BEEFCAKE**
WWF World tag team champions
Combined weight: 511 pounds
- 4—**SCOTT HALL & CURT HENNIG**
AWA World tag team champions
Combined weight: 525 pounds
- 5—**STEVE WILLIAMS & TED DIBLASE**
Mid-South tag team champions
Combined weight: 542 pounds
- 6—**DYNAMITE KID & DAVEY BOY SMITH**
No. 1 contenders to WWF tag team title
Combined weight: 461 pounds
- 7—**RICK MORTON & ROBERT GIBSON**
No. 2 contenders to NWA tag team title
Combined weight: 453 pounds
- 8—**IVAN & NIKITA KOLOFF**
No. 3 contenders to NWA tag team title
Combined weight: 524 pounds
- 9—**TOMMY ROGERS & BOBBY FULTON**
Mid-Southern tag team champions
Combined weight: 462 pounds
- 10—**STEVE KEIRN & STAN LANE**
No. 1 contenders to vacant U.S. tag team title
Combined weight: 499 pounds

NWA, AWA, and WWF ratings, in addition to the regional ratings from around the country, are based on the official current position of challengers to the top title in each category. (Certain titleholders receive an automatic spot in the ratings). Most Popular and Most Hated ratings are based on nationwide surveys of wrestling fans and mail that comes to our offices.

NWA

World Champion:
RIC FLAIR

243, Minneapolis, MN

- 1—**MAGNUM T.A.**
245, Chesapeake, VA
- 2—**DUSTY RHODES**
302, Austin, TX
- 3—**RONNIE GARVIN**
231, Montreal, Quebec
- 4—**NIKITA KOLOFF**
275, Moscow, Russia
- 5—**WAHOO McDANIEL**
260, Midland, TX
- 6—**DICK SLATER**
235, Tampa, FL
- 7—**LEX LUGAR**
280, Chicago, IL
- 8—**BARRY WINDHAM**
236, Sweetwater, TX
- 9—**HARLEY RACE**
253, Kansas City, MO
- 10—**BILLY JACK HAYNES**
245, Portland, OR

AWA

World Champion:
STAN HANSEN

322, Borger, TX

- 1—**SGT. SLAUGHTER**
310, Parris Island, SC
- 2—**RICK MARTEL**
236, Quebec City, Quebec
- 3—**NICK BOCKWINKEL**
245, Beverly Hills, CA
- 4—**BRUISER BRODY**
284, Albuquerque, NM
- 5—**SCOTT HALL**
290, Minneapolis, MN
- 6—**LARRY ZBYSZKO**
248, Pittsburgh, PA
- 7—**THE BARBARIAN**
316, parts unknown
- 8—**BORIS ZUKHOV**
254, Leningrad, Russia
- 9—**GREG GAGNE**
220, Robbinsdale, MN
- 10—**MARTY JANNETTY**
224, Columbus, GA

WWF

World Champion:
HULK HOGAN

302, Venice Beach, CA

- 1—**RANDY SAVAGE**
245, Sarasota, FL
- 2—**JUNKYARD DOG**
260, New Orleans, LA
- 3—**RICK STEAMBOAT**
238, Honolulu, HI
- 4—**KING KONG BUNDY**
446, Atlantic City, NJ
- 5—**TITO SANTANA**
245, Mission, TX
- 6—**PAUL ORNDORFF**
253, Brandon, FL
- 7—**MAGNIFICENT MURACO**
274, Sunset Beach, HA
- 8—**TERRY FUNK**
247, Amarillo, TX
- 9—**JESSE VENTURA**
270, Muscle Beach, CA
- 10—**ADRIAN ADONIS**
303, New York, NY

WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

- 1—**MAGNUM T.A.**
245, Chesapeake, VA
- 2—**DUSTY RHODES**
302, Austin, TX
- 3—**TULLY BLANCHARD**
235, San Antonio, TX
- 4—**RONNIE GARVIN**
231, Montreal, Quebec
- 5—**NIKITA KOLOFF**
275, Moscow, Russia
- 6—**JIM GARVIN**
235, Tampa, FL
- 7—**ARN ANDERSON**
239, Minneapolis, MN
- 8—**SAM HOUSTON**
218, Waco, TX
- 9—**KONGA THE BARBARIAN**
265, Chicago, IL
- 10—**JIMMY VALLANT**
251, New York, NY

ICIAL G RATINGS

WORLD CLASS

- 1—**RICK RUDE**
246, Robbinsdale, MN
- 2—**THE GRAPPLER**
241, parts unknown
- 3—**KERRY VON ERICH**
260, Denton, TX
- 4—**KEVIN VON ERICH**
239, Denton, TX
- 5—**BRUISER BRODY**
284, Albuquerque, NM
- 6—**LANCE VON ERICH**
260, Dallas, TX
- 7—**THE MISSING LINK**
273, parts unknown
- 8—**BRIAN ADIDAS**
238, Denton, TX
- 9—**ICEMAN PARSONS**
242, St. Louis, MO
- 10—**STEVE REGAL**
238, Ft. Lauderdale, FL

MID-SOUTH

- 1—**DICK SLATER**
235, Tampa, FL
- 2—**HACKSAW DUGGAN**
280, Glens Falls, NY
- 3—**DICK MURDOCH**
270, Waxahachie, TX
- 4—**TERRY TAYLOR**
225, Vero Beach, FL
- 5—**STEVE WILLIAMS**
265, Tulsa, OK
- 6—**TED DiBIASE**
247, Omaha, NB
- 7—**MASKED SUPERSTAR**
282, parts unknown
- 8—**BUZZ SAWYER**
240, St. Petersburg, FL
- 9—**TARRAS BULBA**
237, Outer Mongolia
- 10—**BRETT SAWYER**
242, St. Petersburg, FL

FLORIDA

- 1—**LEX LUGAR**
280, Chicago, IL
- 2—**THE CUBAN ASSASSIN**
236, Cuba
- 3—**JESSE BARR**
243, Portland, OR
- 4—**BARRY WINDHAM**
236, Sweetwater, TX
- 5—**KEVIN SULLIVAN**
239, Boston, MA
- 6—**BLACKJACK MULLIGAN**
310, Sweetwater, TX
- 7—**KENDALL WINDHAM**
220, Sweetwater, TX
- 8—**MAHA SINGH**
273, Tampa, FL
- 9—**MIKE GRAHAM**
229, Tampa, FL
- 10—**TYREE PRIDE**
231, Haiti

MID-SOUTHERN

- 1—**BILL DUNDEE**
214, Melbourne, Australia
- 2—**RICK CASEY**
239, San Antonio, TX
- 3—**DIRTY RHODES**
302, Austin, TX
- 4—**BUDDY LANDELL**
236, Los Angeles, CA
- 5—**AUSTIN IDOL**
240, Las Vegas, NV
- 6—**DUTCH MANTEL**
242, Bucksnorth, TN
- 7—**PHIL HICKERSON**
257, Jackson, TN
- 8—**LARRY HAMILTON**
232, Tampa, FL
- 9—**TOJO YAMAMOTO**
230, Tokyo, Japan
- 10—**BILLY TRAVIS**
225, Lexington, KY

CONTINENTAL

- 1—**EXOTIC ADRIAN STREET**
227, South Wales
- 2—**ROBERT FULLER**
238, Dyresburg, TN
- 3—**NORVELL AUSTIN**
239, Pensacola, FL
- 4—**BRAD ARMSTRONG**
226, Marietta, GA
- 5—**JERRY STUBBS**
235, Pensacola, FL
- 6—**TIM HORNER**
235, Morristown, TN
- 7—**TOMMY RICH**
232, Hendersonville, TN
- 8—**JIMMY GOLDEN**
234, Montgomery, AL
- 9—**JOHNNY RICH**
238, Hendersonville, TN
- 10—**ROBERTO SOTO**
231, San Juan, Puerto Rico

NORTHWEST

- 1—**TOM ZENK**
237, Robbinsdale, MN
- 2—**RIP OLIVER**
245, Tampa, FL
- 3—**BILLY JACK HAYNES**
245, Portland
- 4—**BOBBY JAGGERS**
265, Dunlap, KS
- 5—**MIKE MILLER**
260, Memphis, TN
- 6—**BRADY BOONE**
236, Charlotte, NC
- 7—**SCOTT DORING**
255, Minneapolis, MN
- 8—**THE ASSASSIN**
249, parts unknown
- 9—**MOONDOG MORETTI**
245, Boise, ID
- 10—**COCOA SAMOA**
239, Samoa

MOST POPULAR

- 1—**HULK HOGAN**
302, Venice Beach, CA
- 2—**KERRY VON ERICH**
260, Denton, TX
- 3—**DUSTY RHODES**
302, Austin, TX
- 4—**PAUL ORNDORFF**
253, Brandon, FL
- 5—**MAGNUM T.A.**
245, Chesapeake, VA
- 6—**JUNKYARD DOG**
260, New Orleans, LA
- 7—**RONNIE GARVIN**
231, Montreal, Quebec
- 8—**BARRY WINDHAM**
236, Sweetwater, TX
- 9—**KEVIN VON ERICH**
239, Denton, TX
- 10—**TERRY TAYLOR**
225, Vero Beach, FL

MOST HATED

- 1—**KING KONG BUNDY**
446, Atlantic City, NJ
- 2—**RIC FLAIR**
243, Minneapolis, MN
- 3—**RANDY SAVAGE**
245, Sarasota, FL
- 4—**STAN HANSEN**
322, Borger, TX
- 5—**TULLY BLANCHARD**
235, San Antonio, TX
- 6—**RICK RUDE**
246, Robbinsdale, MN
- 7—**NIKITA KOLOFF**
276, Moscow, Russia
- 8—**JIM GARVIN**
235, Tampa, FL
- 9—**MAGNIFICENT MURACO**
274, Sunset Beach, HI
- 10—**DICK SLATER**
235, Tampa, FL

For period ended February 27, 1986

RATINGS ANALYSIS

Every month, this column will tell fans how we go about rating more than 150 wrestlers in 14 different categories. It is a behind-the-scenes look at the most important—and respected—ratings system in the sport. This column is vital reading for all wrestling fans.

Assorted ratings highlights: You'll note that **Rick Rude** is listed in the Top 10 as "World Class champion." Last issue, you may recall, Rude was called the "World Class American champion." The change reflects the fact that the World Class area has withdrawn from the NWA, and declared Rude's American championship a world title. As a result, we will now call that title the "World Class championship." You will also note that World Class wrestlers are no longer represented in the NWA ratings. For more information on what this development means to wrestling, pick up a copy of the July 1986 issue of *Pro Wrestling Illustrated*... We've added extra underlines in the Top 10 category, providing championships as well as weights, just as in the tag team ratings... In other Top 10 ratings movement this past month: **Magnum T.A.** moved up a notch to number four... **Randy Savage** up one to number five... **Sgt. Slaughter** and **Rick Martel** drop out of the Top 10, making way for **Rick Rude** and **Bruiser Brody** at the nine and 10 spots, respectively... In the Tag Team Top 10, **Scott Hall** and **Curt Hennig** leapfrogged from six to four... **Ivan** and **Nikita Koloff** dropped all the way from four to eight... **The British Bulldogs** keep getting better and better as they move up another notch to number six... **The Fantastics** and **The Fabulous Ones** break into the Top 10 this month at nine and 10, respectively.

Let's go to the mailbag: Despite the purported analytical nature of this column, "Ratings Analysis" continues to receive a lot of mail each day on the order of: "Can you tell me if **Ric Flair** has a fan club?" and "Where can I write to **Kerry Von Erich**?"

That's why it's so refreshing to receive a letter like the one you're about to read from **Shane Robinson** of Winnipeg, Manitoba, who had a lot to say about our ratings. Here goes:

After reading the April 1986 issue of *The Wrestler*, I was shocked. Your quickness in reporting **Stan Hansen's** win of the AWA World championship is to be commended, but your subsequent "ratings" was unbelievably ridiculous; no, plain stupid.

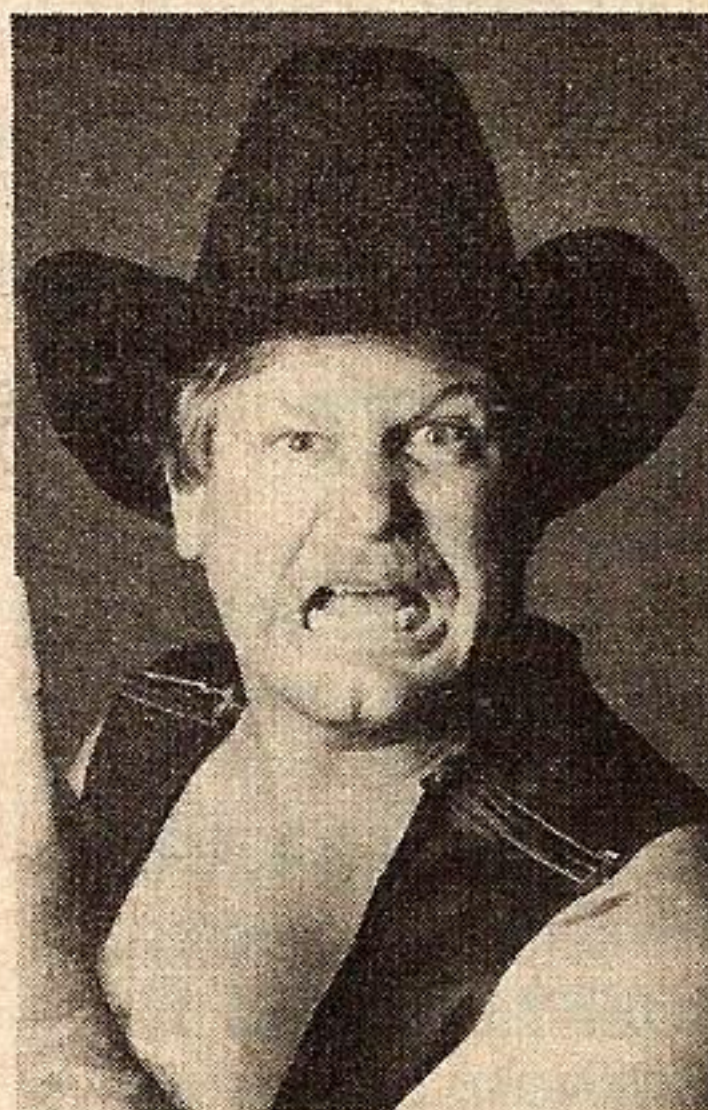
How in the world could you rate **Stan Hansen** as number five in the Top 10? He cleanly beats **Rick Martel** who was number two for virtually all of 1985, and you rank Hansen number five! What's worse is that you have ranked him behind **Hulk Hogan**, **Dusty Rhodes**, and **Magnum T.A.**!

Is this to say that **Magnum's** title is worth more than a world championship belt, or that **Magnum** is better than Hansen at this point in time? I have to believe you'd rank **Magnum** higher than a world champion because your staff simply likes **Magnum** more.

Dusty Rhodes at number three? Good Lord, you have got to be kidding! Very simply, **Dusty** is one of the most overrat-

ed wrestlers in the sport today. Whether you guys want to believe and accept it or not, the only reason **Dusty** seems so good is because of his title matches with **Ric Flair**. I might point out to you in case you didn't know it: **Dusty** has not cleanly defeated **Flair**.

Now the only thing worse than **Rhodes'** ranking is **Hulk Hogan's** place on the list. Number two? That's truly unbelievable. I was similarly disgusted a while back in 1985 when one of your magazines did a cover story on **Hogan vs. Mr. Fuji**. How this story deserved a cover position was beyond me, but even more incredible was the fact that you guys rated **Hogan** number two over AWA champion **Martel**. This was at the time that **Hogan** was nowhere to be found in **Madison Square Garden**. So the great "Huckster" beats up and soundly, easily, and strongly defeats an over-the-hill, out-of-shape, tuxedo-clad manager. **Martel** goes on (without stints on *The Love Boat*, *The Tonight Show*, *The A-Team*, etc.) and defeats real wrestlers, while **Hogan** beats up an out-of-shape manager. And you rank **Hogan** higher than **Martel**. Wow!



Stan Hansen

the sport has to offer in such a short time. **Hogan** can't even cleanly defeat **Roddy Piper**, who only wrestles three days a week! Sure, he can cleanly beat an old manager (**Fuji**), and an out-of-shape commentator (**Jesse Ventura**). I never saw **Hansen** defend his belt against **Sheik Adnan Al-Kaissie**.

I do think that the coverage you gave to the **Martel-Hansen** feud was good. Your ratings system, however, leaves a lot to be desired for something as fine as your publication.

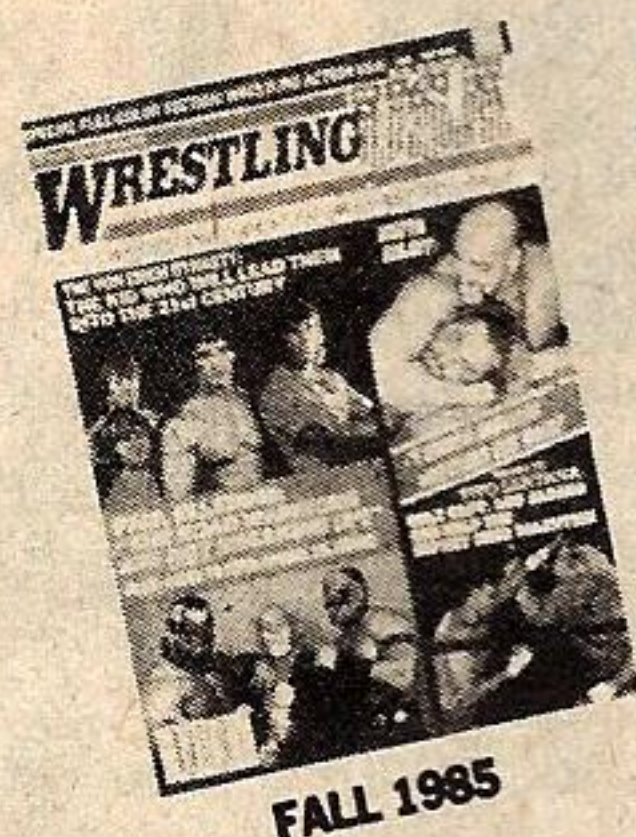
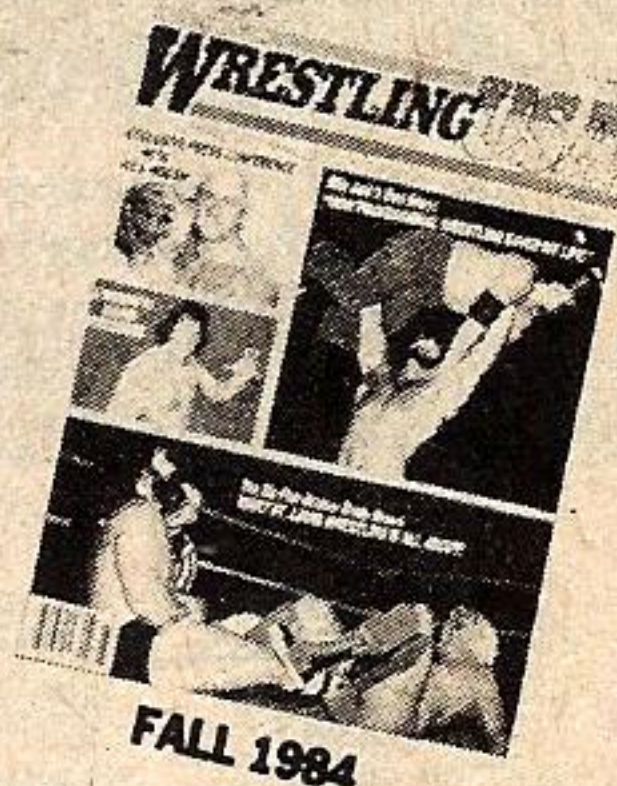
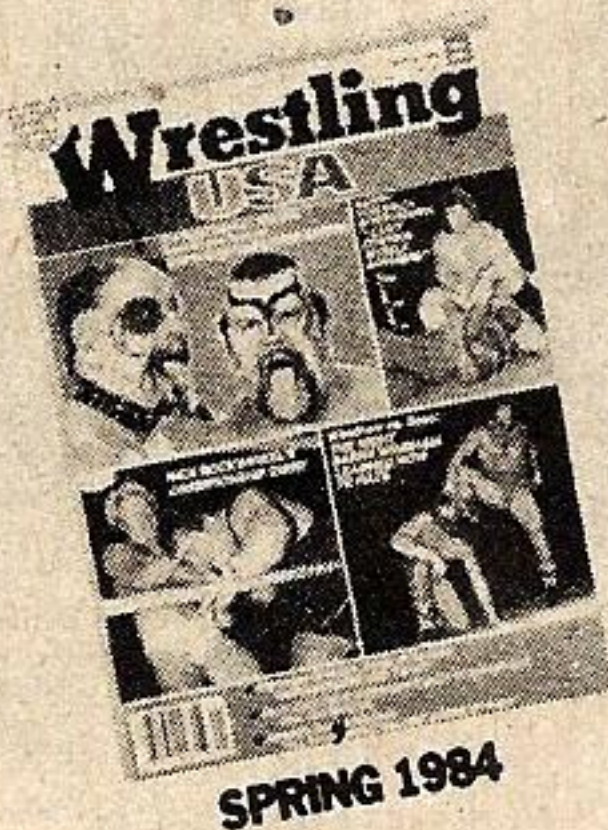
The address for mail: You may not have as much to say about our ratings as **Shane** did, but we still want to know what you think. Address your comments to: "Ratings Analysis" c/o *The Wrestler*; Box 48; Rockville Centre; NY 11571. □

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YOUR LETTERS

(Continued from page 6)

and miss you always. You were a first-class champion. God bless you, Gino.

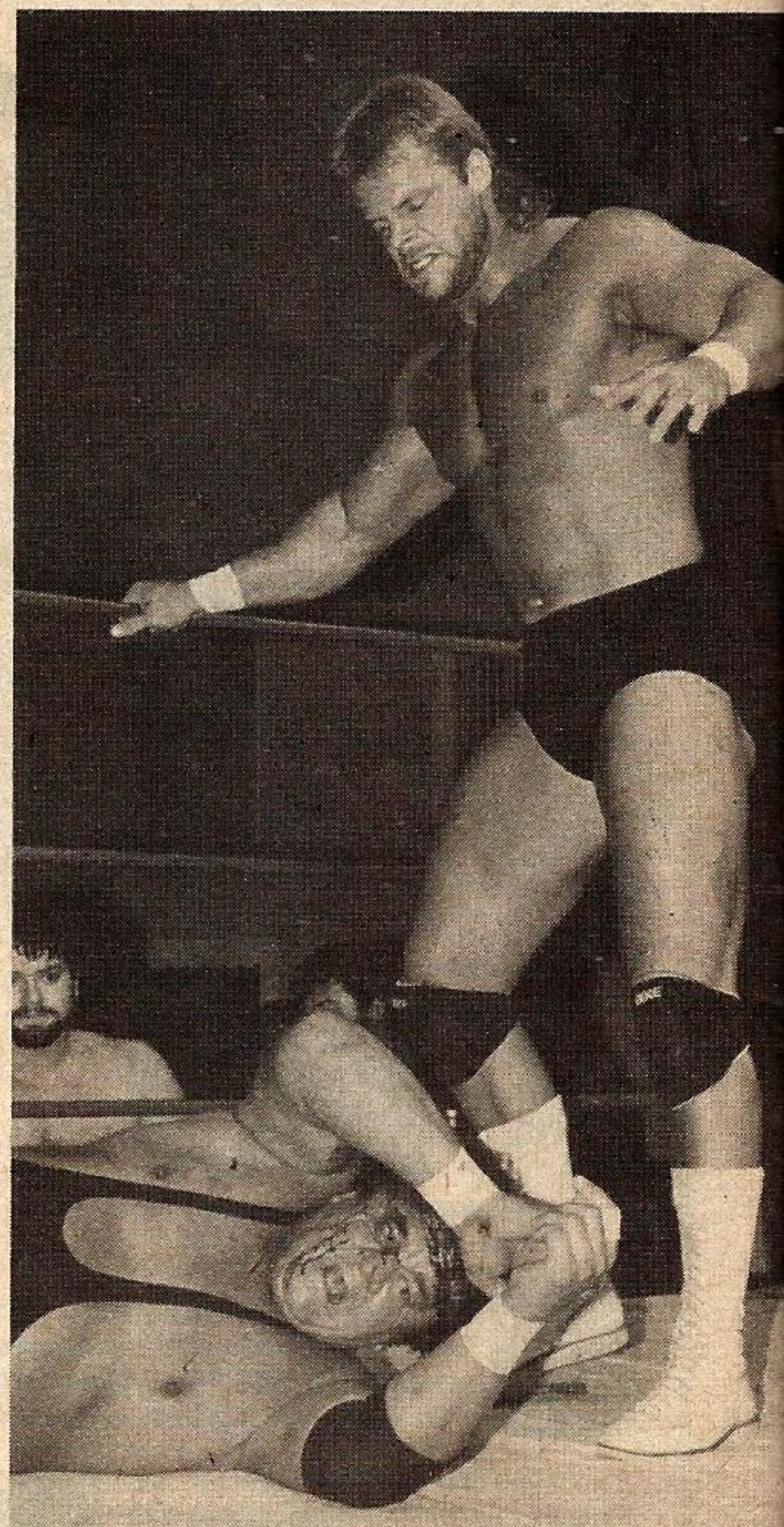
RUTH HAGAN

Westville, NJ

THE CURSE OF CONFIDENCE

Your article on Lex Luger in the April 1986 issue was very interesting ("Southern Champion Lex Luger: 'I'll Run Barry Windham Back To The WWF!'").

As anyone who has seen Luger on television can tell you, he is a very confident young man. The article showed this. Perhaps it is overconfidence that caused him to recently lose the Southern title to Jesse Barr. In fact, Luger is so confident, he thinks Barr could not possibly have

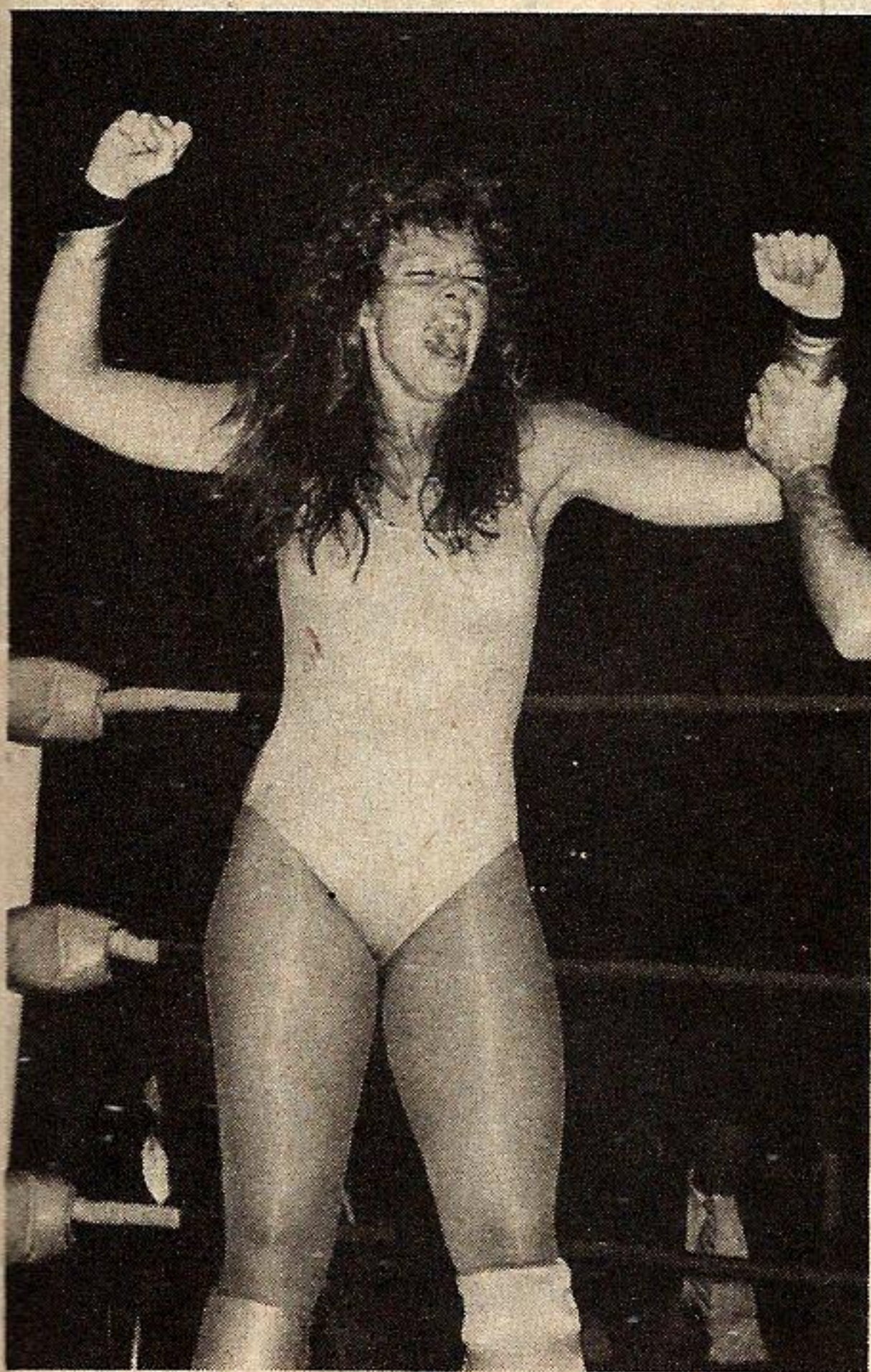


Young Lex Luger kicks the back of veteran Wahoo McDaniel's head. Reader Stephen Caruso suspects that Luger is overconfident.

pinned him legally. He claims that Barr pulled his trunks, even though Barr pinned him cleanly in the middle of the ring. Lugar is saying Barr stole his title, and he'll regain it from Barr easily. I believe that even though Lugar is big and strong, this overconfidence could hurt him severely in the future.

STEPHEN CARUSO
Columbia, MD

[Editor's note: Lex Lugar regained the Southern title from Jesse Barr on February 14, in Orlando, Florida, less than one month after originally losing that championship to Barr.]



Wendi Richter brought excitement to women's wrestling that Kenneth Raftery thinks is missing in her absence.

COME BACK, WENDI!

An open letter to Wendi Richter:

I must admit that I am not one of your biggest fans. In fact, I like Fabulous Moolah. But after reading the article about you in the April 1986 issue of *The Wrestler* ("Q & A"), I began to feel sorry for you.

I don't see any reason why you shouldn't get a rematch with Moolah for the title. You brought a lot of excitement to wrestling. Please don't leave.

KENNETH RAFTERY
Staten Island, NY

(Continued on page 50)

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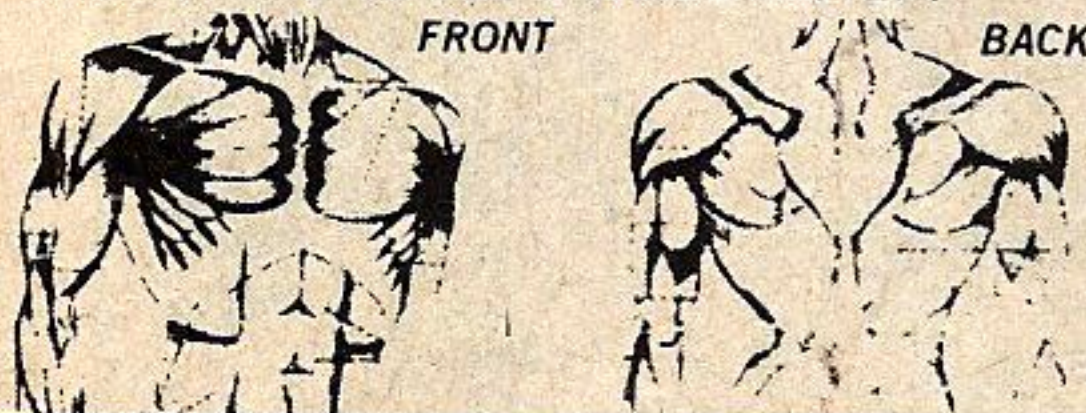
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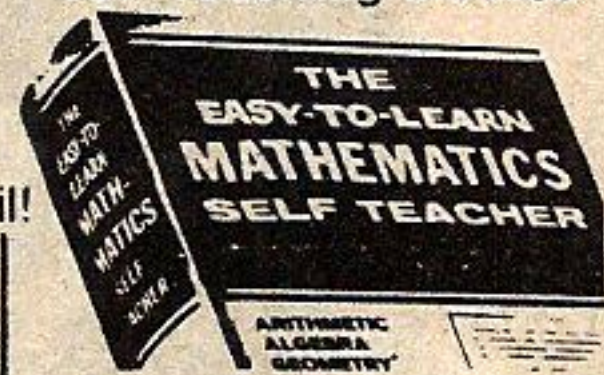
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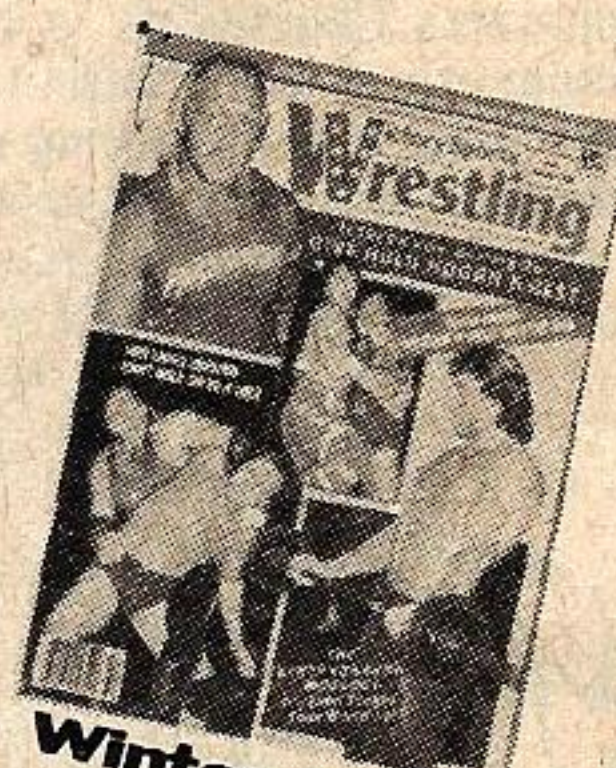
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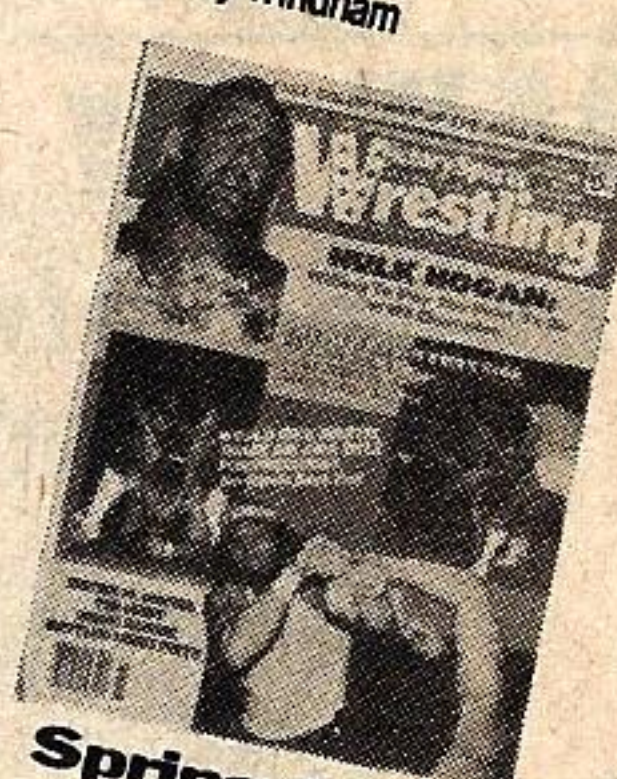
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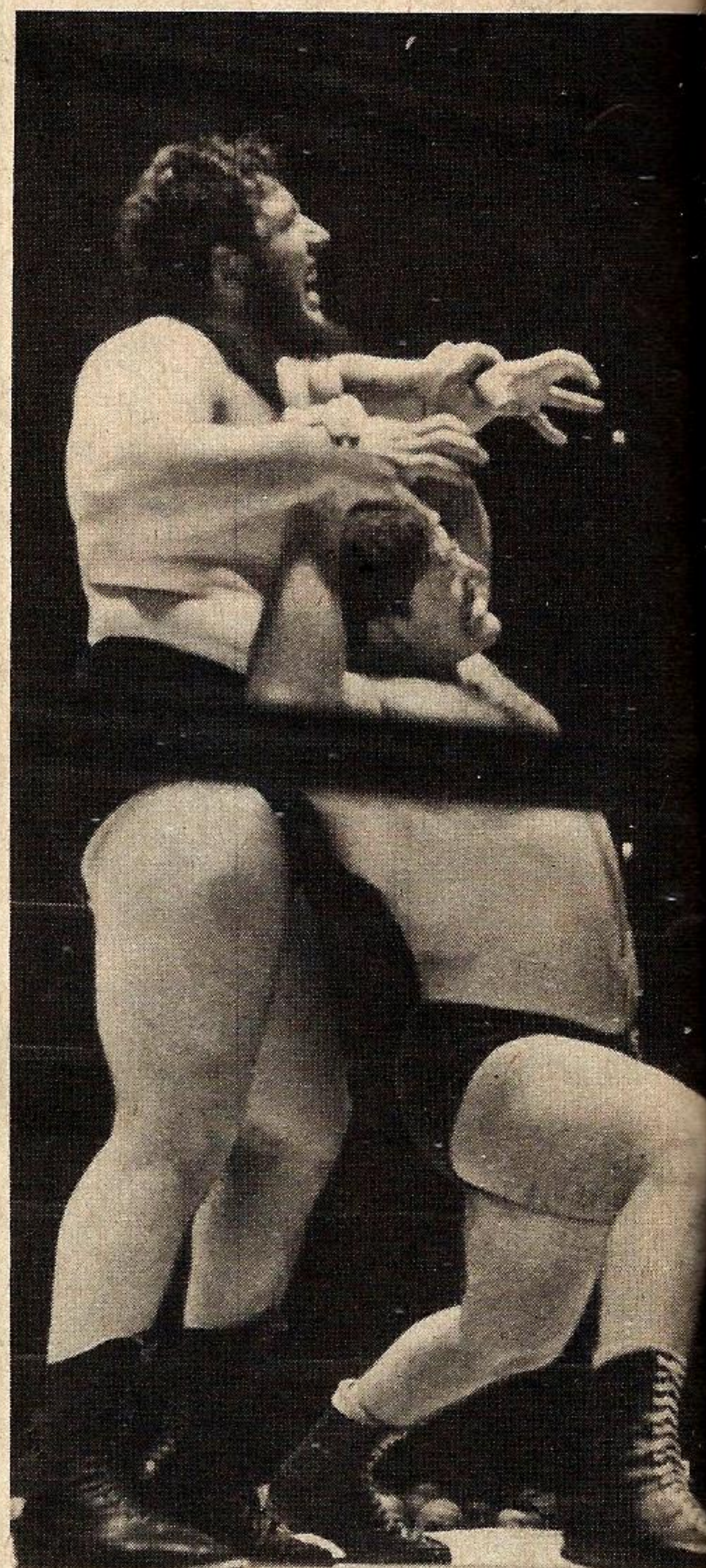
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YOUR LETTERS

(Continued from page 49)



If Bruno Sammartino was able to handle such giants as Gorilla Monsoon during his championship years, he could certainly handle Hulk Hogan as well, writes Paul Cooper.

BRUNO: NO NONSENSE

Since Bruno Sammartino has come out of retirement, I wonder if he has any hidden desire to become WWF champion again. I'll tell you, Bruno still looks tremendous in the squared circle, comparable even to when he was in his prime 20 years ago. The Living Legend has lost none of the strength, skill, and drive that made him the greatest wrestler of all time in my book. He can still teach all these loudmouthed punks like Roddy Piper a lesson they won't soon forget.

Although I know it would be a

hard-fought, grueling match, I believe that Bruno could defeat Hulk Hogan and win back the title. I'm not putting down the Hulkster, since he is a fine champ in his own right. He's awful big and tough. But Sammartino brought down many giants over the years, and the Hulkster would be no exception. Bruno's significant edge in experience would be the deciding factor.

However, it would be a miracle if the WWF let Bruno have a title shot, even if he wanted one. In a way, maybe it's just as well. Bruno would seem out of place as champion of today's WWF. Back when Bruno held the belt, the WWF was a no non-sense wrestling organization second to none. Now it's still good, but they go way overboard with this rock 'n' roll stuff. It's getting tedious. Bruno Sammartino was always one for taking care of business in the ring; it's hard to imagine him selling dolls.

PAUL COOPER
Altoona, PA □

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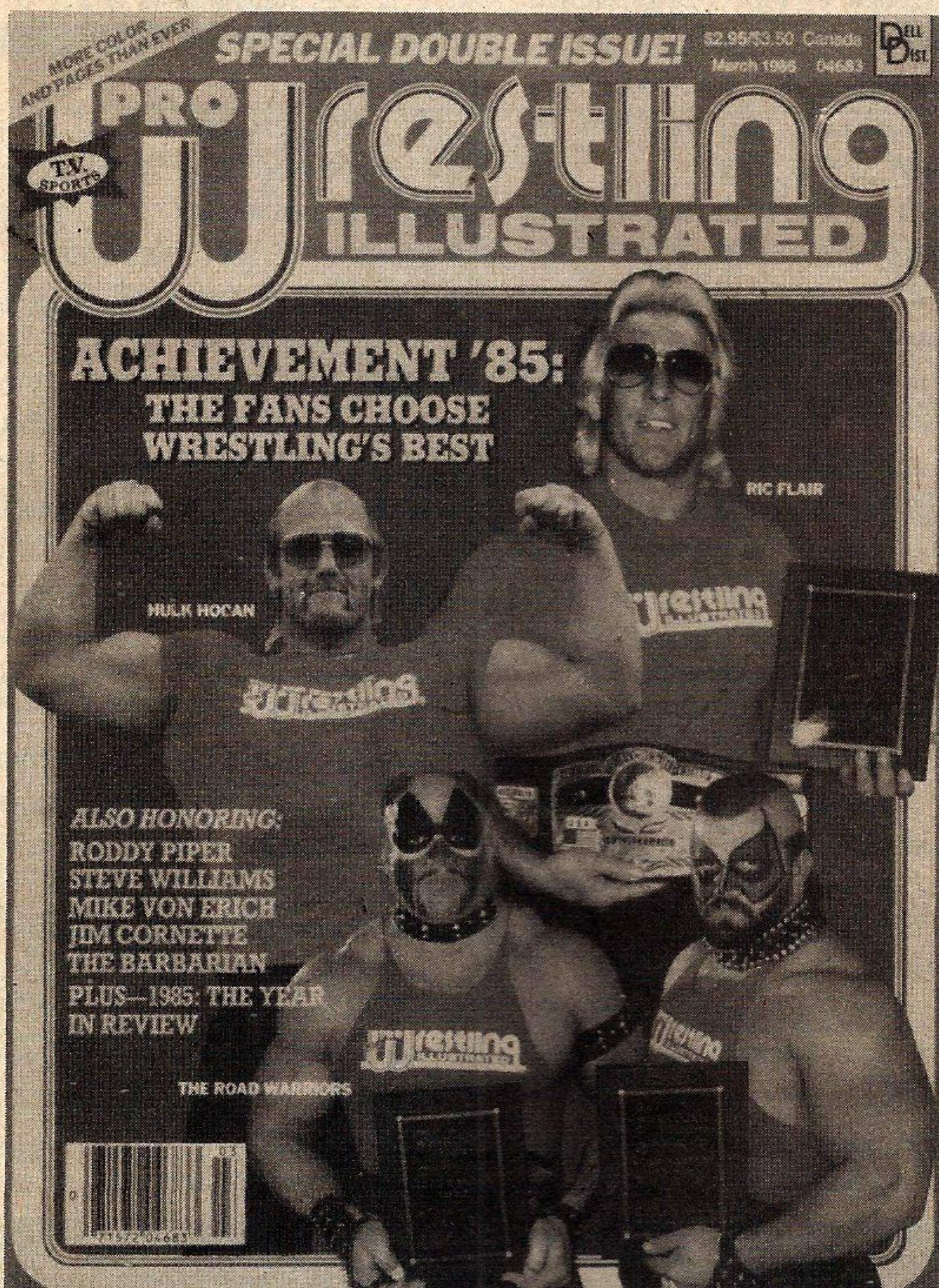
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HULK HOGAN

(Continued from page 33)

sign an open-ended boxing contract. The contract was another calculated publicity gambit by Piper, Orton laughably claims to be an amateur boxer. Maybe he was; I doubt it. But Piper believes it enough to make him an integral part of his plan.

Although he won't admit it, it's easy to read between the blueprints. Piper's grand design was to embarrass Hogan into a boxing match with Cowboy Bob, pepper the proud champ with threats, accuse him of cowardice, and watch from the safe distance of the studio as Orton KOs the wrestling champ. Observing the rules of Queensbury would undermine Hogan's entire style; gloves would neutralize his effectiveness in the ring—he'd be a sitting duck for Orton.

Except this time the WWF champ would not be had. Hogan called his bluff; he teased the Scot right up to the dotted line before he sprung a surprise of his own: his own ace in the form of Mr. T.

Who be the fool now, fool?

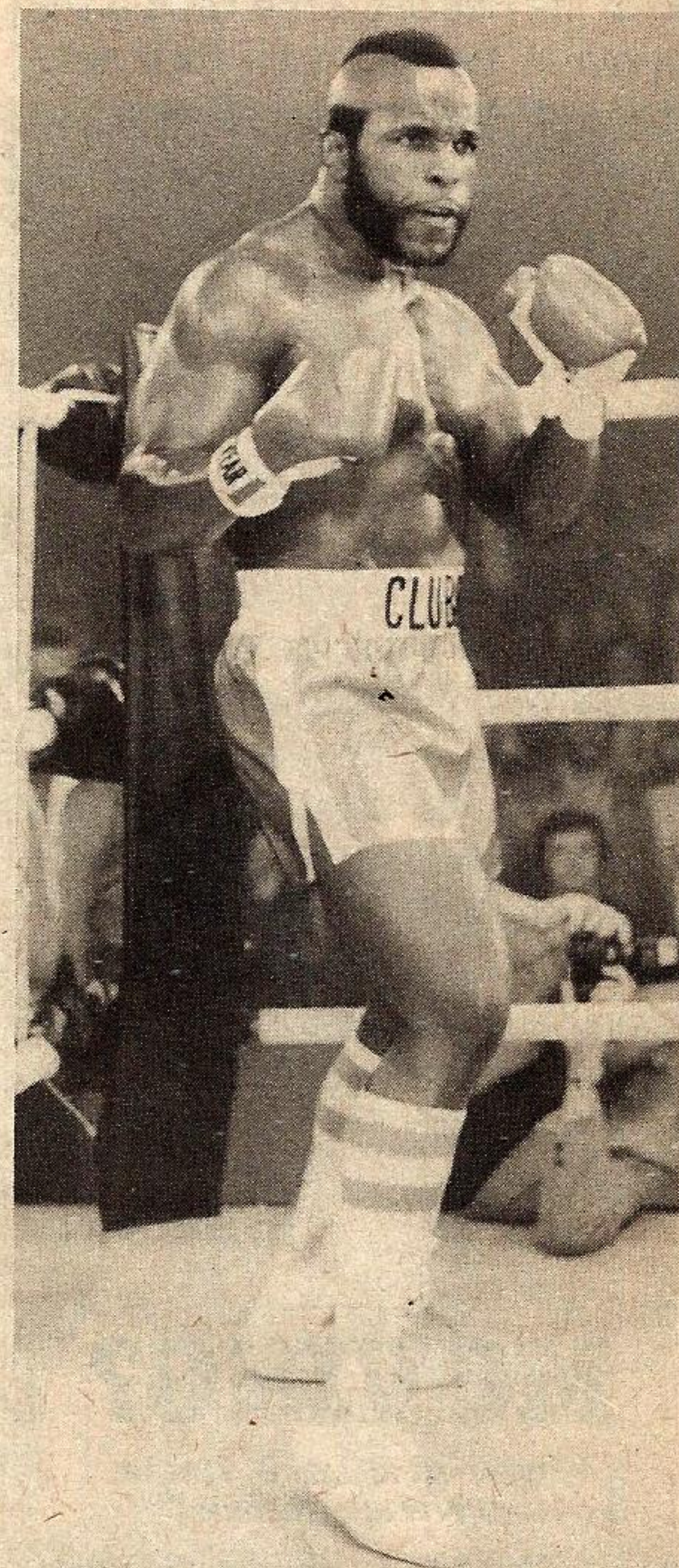
Hogan went Piper one better. He demanded and received a wrestling match against Ace, and, while staring in contempt at Piper throughout, battered the hapless Cowboy. But more

significant than his defeat of Orton and of the pasting Orton promises to receive at the skilled paws of T, is the compromising position Piper now finds himself in.

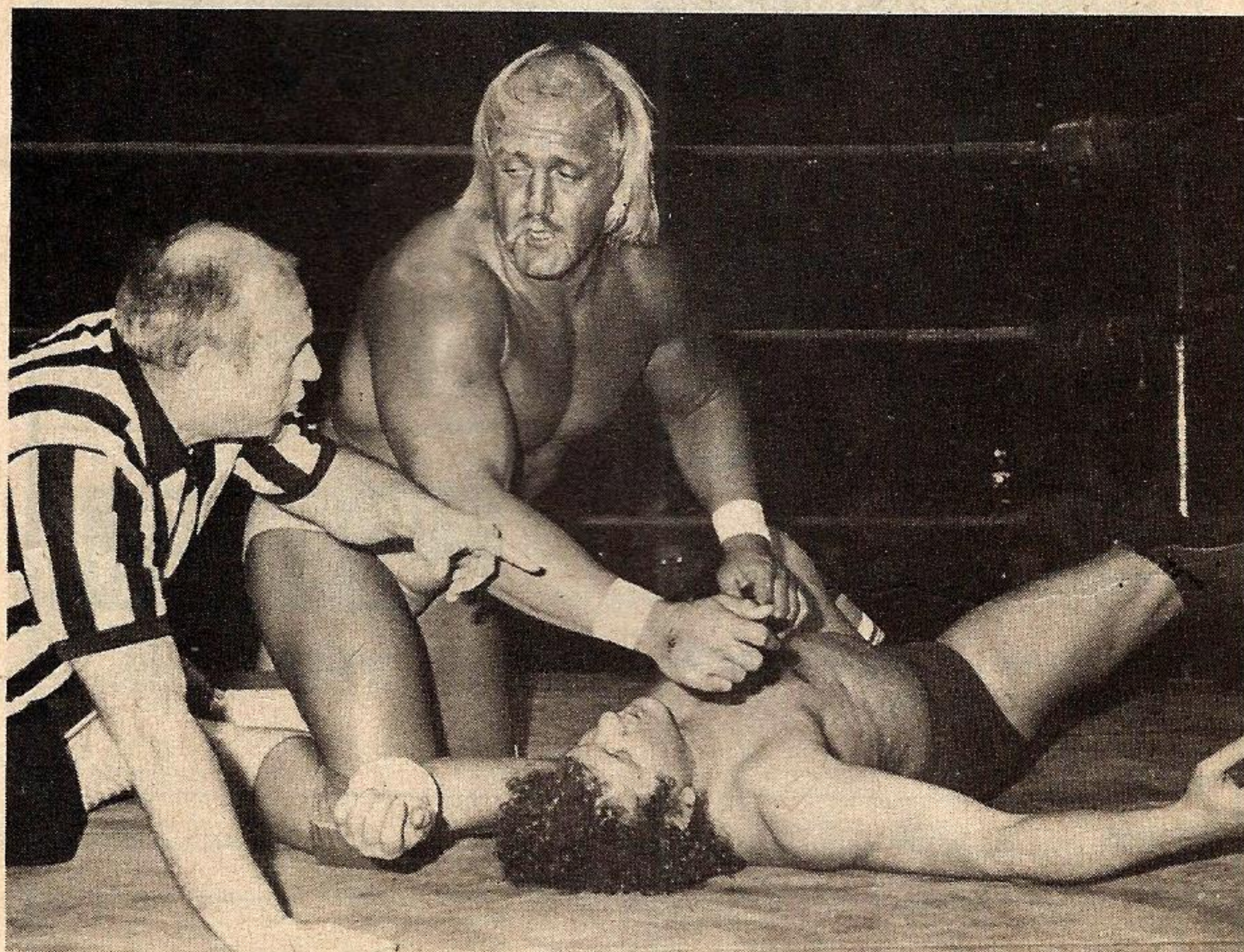
Hot Rod's exorbitant need of spotlight might lead him, however reluctantly, back into the ring. If we're lucky, maybe the pugnacious and bellicose Piper of yesteryear might even show up, instead of the slack-jowled imitation we've watched erode away to mush in his TV studio. In any case, it is Hogan—famous for his brash, straightforward ring wars; his uncalculated, *let's find the enemy and let him be mine* credo—who has duped the master duper.

It's been Hogan's desire, since WrestleMania 1, to find himself alone in the ring with Roddy Piper. Although much of Hogan's intensity comes from the umbilical cord relationship he's developed with his fans, a singles match against Piper he'd fight without witnesses, without cameras and microphones. Just his fists and Hot Rod, and the redemptive powers of revenge.

Of course Piper would never agree to such a contract. Without a bevy of bodyguards to protect him, it would



Mr. T, who played Clubber Lang in *Rocky III*, will be swinging the leather for real against Orton—and probably Piper as well.



Hogan is warned against choking Orton. Actually, the Hulkster would be just as happy to forget about Orton entirely and just get Roddy Piper alone in the ring.

not occur to Piper to stroll down the street. His paranoia, his ego, stretches and confounds the imagination. Because of his obsessive qualities, he is more dangerous behind the camera than he is in the ring. He must be removed from the teeming masses who are compelled to listen to him. In the worst of all scenarios, Piper could conceivably attract a cult with the manic aggressiveness inspired by devils like Jim Jones and Adolph Hitler. His racist attacks have no theologic philosophic boundaries. Everyone and everything is ripe for Piper's maddening iconoclastic plots.

Hulkamania has stalked this prey long enough. It's time to extinguish Roddy Piper from the endangered species list—it's time to make this sucker extinct. □

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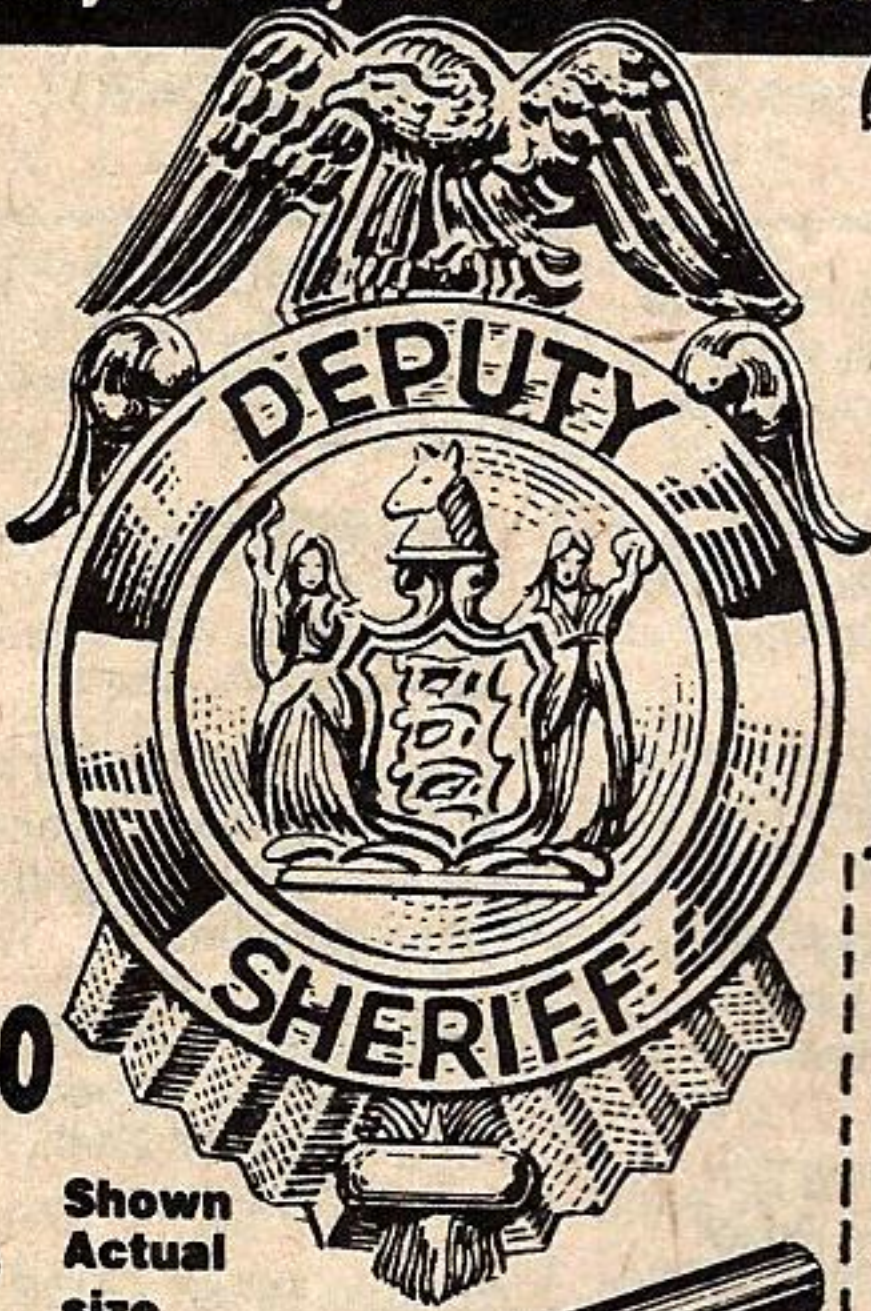
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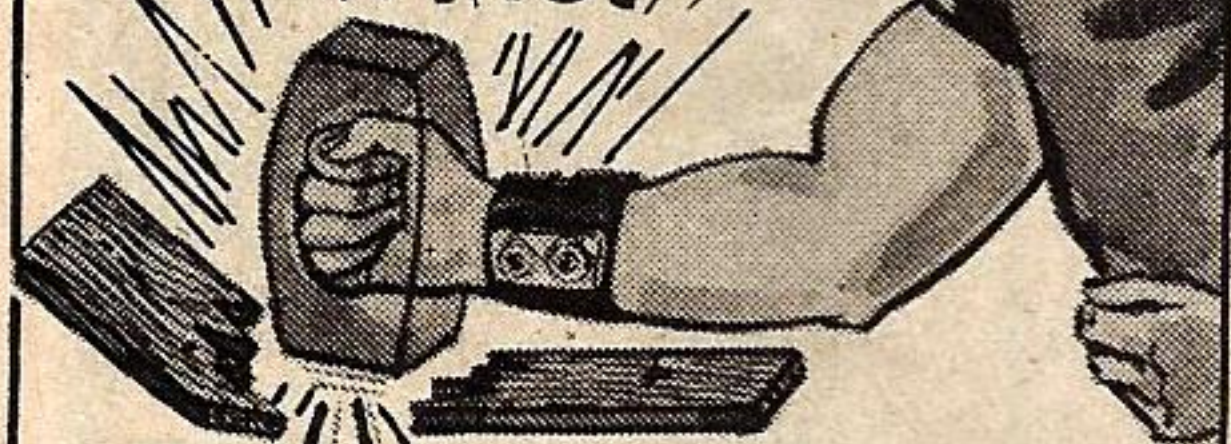
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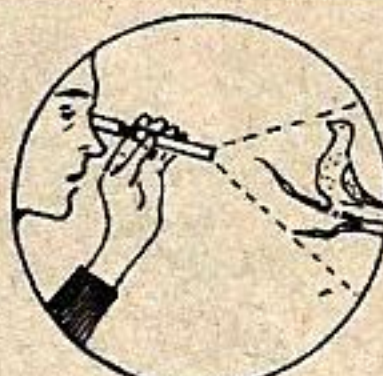
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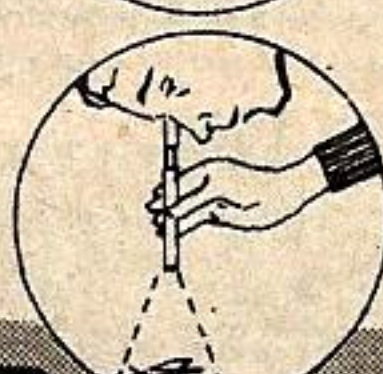
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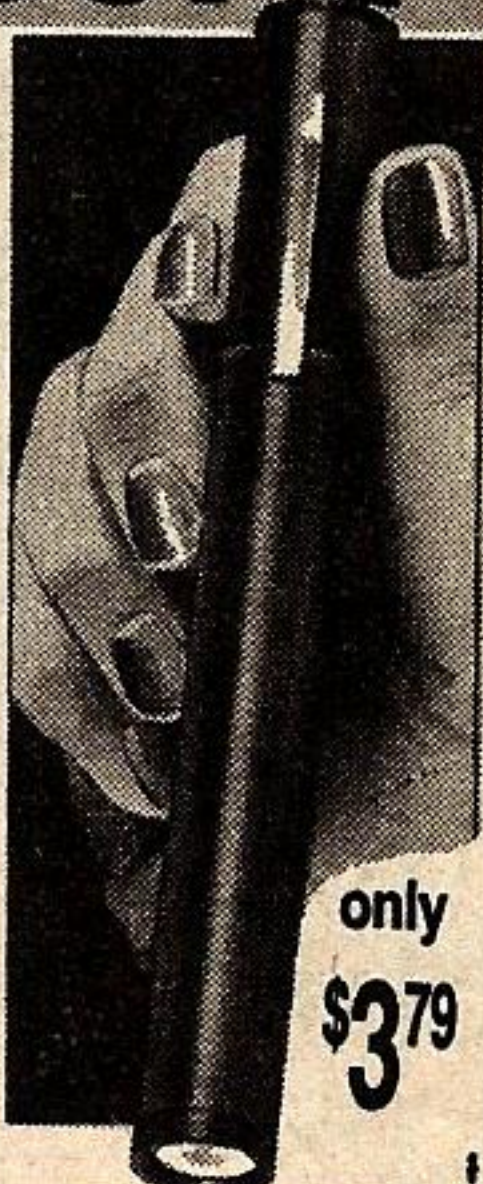
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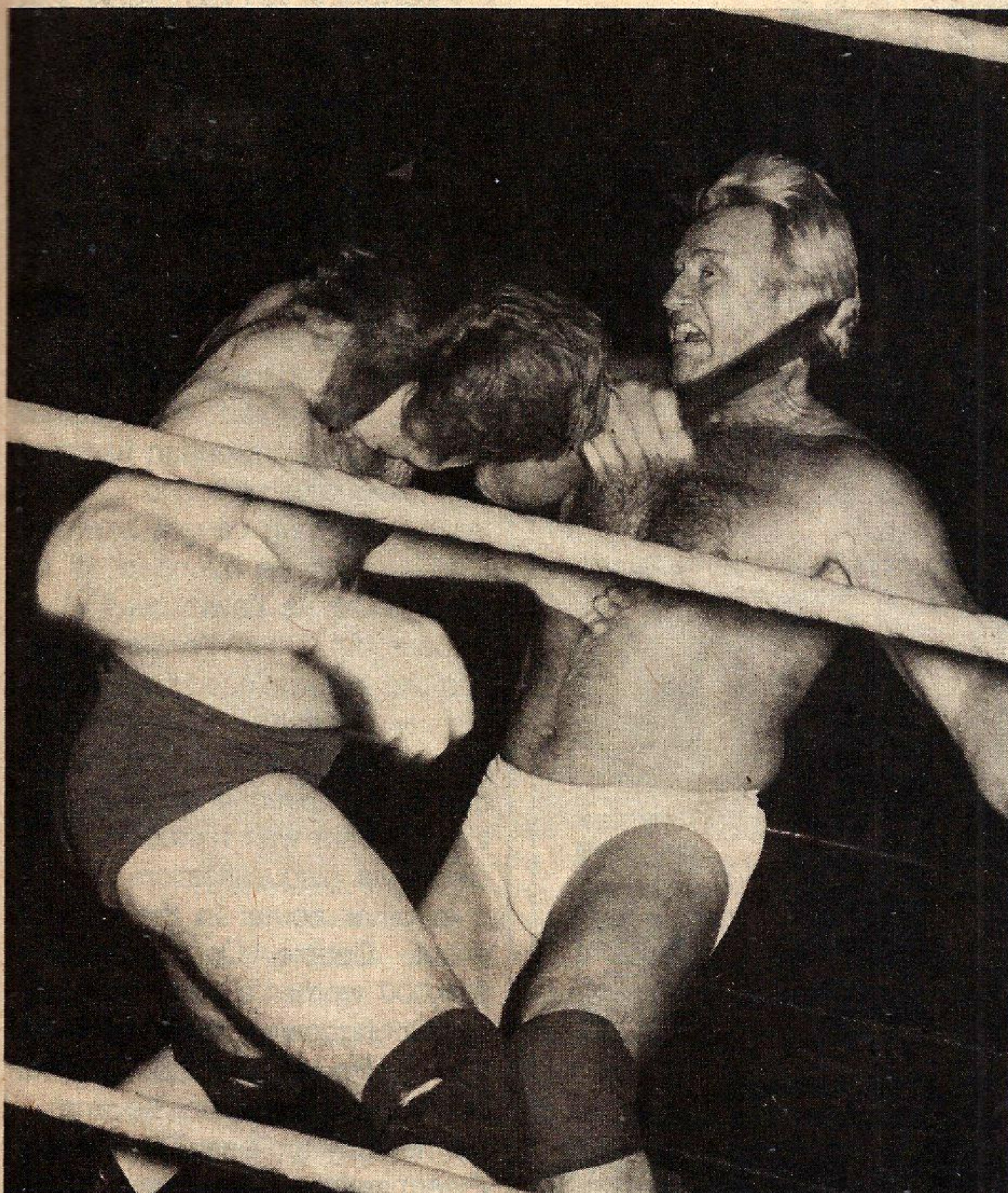
(Continued from page 8)

belt? Films show conclusively that Savage went into his trunks for something while being suplexed and slid it out of the ring after making the pin. As of yet, no protest has been filed by Santana.

Two weeks later, Savage was pinned in a non-title Intercontinental match by **Paul Orndorff** in Miami. On the same card, **Junkyard Dog** pinned his nemesis, **Terry Funk**, but was then double-teamed by Funk and his brother, **Dory**. The brothers left JYD battered and semiconscious, making this the second beating within a month that JYD received at the hands of the Texas terrors. The Dog is now scouring the WWF for a tag team partner to aid him in this feud. Names being floated around include **Ricky Steamboat**, **S.D. Jones**, **Hillbilly Jim**, and **Pedro Morales**.

Does **Roddy Piper** expect us to believe **Bob Orton Jr.** has had extensive amateur boxing experience? Orton may shine against the likes of **Jose Luis Rivera**, but I shudder to think of the damage **Mr. T** will inflict upon his face. Mr. Piper has gone too far this time and, as is usually the case, someone else will pay for his damage.

The feud between **Jimmy "Superfly" Snuka** and Polynesian champion **Jerry Lawler** has spread from Hawaii over to the mainland. Los Angeles has been the scene of their latest wars. With the crowd cheering wildly for Snuka, the Superfly clamped an abdominal stretch on Lawler. The referee approached Lawler and asked if he could continue. Lawler, in obvious pain, struck the referee and was immediately disqualified. Snuka was livid at the outcome. "Man, the only way I do battle with that cat anymore is in a no-disqualification match," he said. "Lawler ain't no king; he's just a yellow-streaked coconut head."



Nick Bockwinkel grabs Larry Zbyszko's nunchakus and slams them against the side of his head. Bockwinkel seeks a no-disqualification match with Zbyszko.

Speaking of no-DQ matches, now that **Nick Bockwinkel** is back in action, he's been demanding a return no-DQ match with **Larry Zbyszko**. "Every match we've had so far has ended with that greaseball running out of the ring," the three-time former AWA champion said. "I'm sick of it. This is no kid's game. I've got better things to do than play hide and seek with a felon. I want a cage match. No referee, no disqualifications, no weapons. Just him against me, flesh on flesh, muscle on muscle. Then we'll see who the better man is."

Actually, Bockwinkel wrestled the nunchakus out of Zbyszko's hands last month in Baltimore and almost bled the life out of him. The referee disqualified the three-time AWA champ in *eight seconds*.

Wahoo McDaniel survived the eight-month anniversary of **Ric Flair's** bounty by pinning the NWA champ in a non-title cage match. McDaniel demanded and received an open contract for a series of title matches against the champ. "Flair knows that he can't beat me," Wahoo told me. "And he knows that no amount of money will get me out of his hair. If he was smart he'd just hand me the title. It would save him the embarrassment of losing it in public."

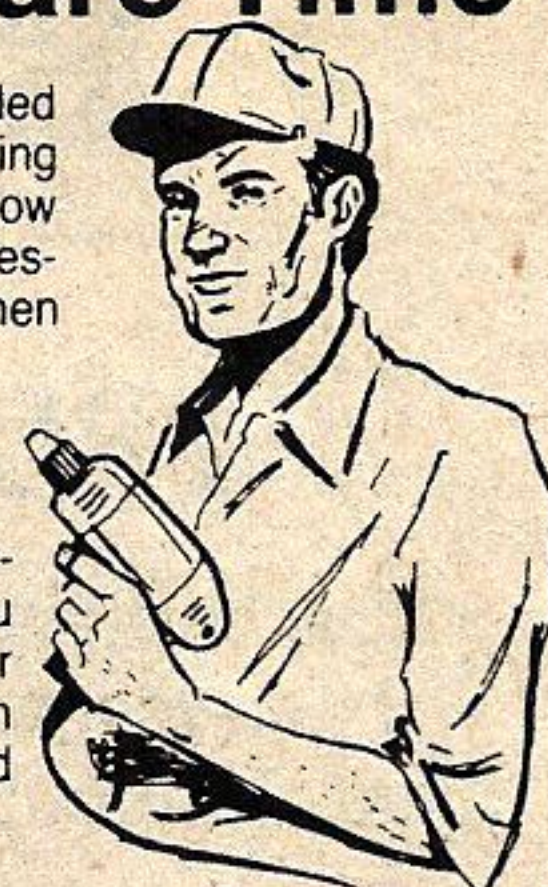
Bubba Douglas, for years a North Florida wrestling hero, died in February of a heart attack. Lately, Douglas had worked as a critically acclaimed and respected referee in the area. He will be sorely missed.

And that's what's happening. See you at the matches! □

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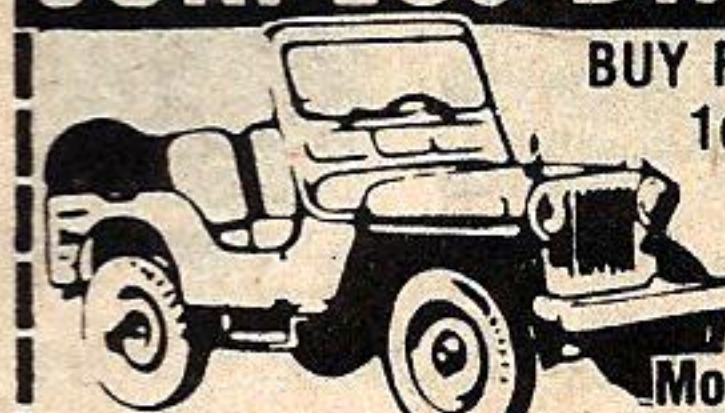
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CORRESPONDENTS

(Continued from page 10)

by Polynesian Pro Wrestling at the Civic Center, Jerry Lawler defended his Polynesian Pacific heavyweight title against former champ Lars Anderson.

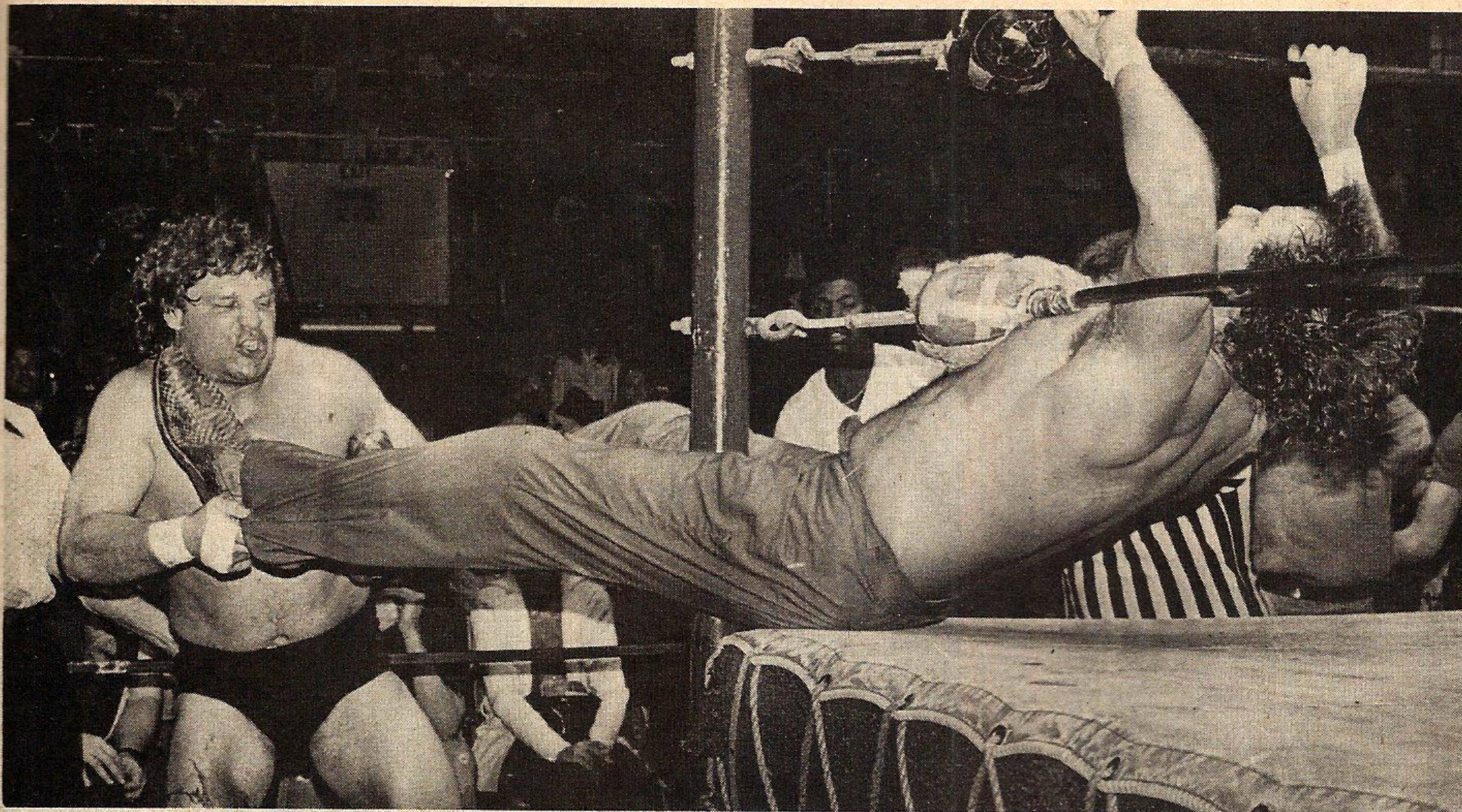
The bout was a complete slugfest. Lawler used closed-fist blows to keep Anderson off-balance. Lawler attempted a fistdrop, missed, and Lars began hammering away with blows to Lawler's head. Lars then caught Lawler in a sleeper as he bounded off the ropes. Just as Lawler was about to pass out, Buddy Wolfe jumped into the ring, rescued Lawler, and the two began double-teaming Lars. Jimmy Snuka ran into the ring and cleared it of Wolfe and Lawler. Lars was handed the decision via disqualification.

In other bouts: In the co-main event, Debbie Combs won a \$10,000 women's battle royal ... Jay Strongbow Jr. beat Tim Petersen ... Powerteam U.S.A. defeated Mighty Milo & Don Stevens ... Farmer Boy Ipo beat The Russian Exterminator ... Jimmy Snuka beat Buddy Wolfe ... Rocky Johnson defeated Cyclone Negro.

Houston, TX (Correspondents—Janet & Jimmy Schofield): Hearts were beating fast in the Sam Houston Coliseum on Valentine's Day evening as the North American title was on the line when Jake "The Snake" Roberts challenged "Mr. Unpredictable" Dick Slater.

Slater appeared to the boos of the crowd with his valet, Dark Journey, who was wearing a neck collar. (She had been DDT'd by Roberts a few days earlier after she had thrown black oil in Roberts' face.)

As the referee searched Dark Journey (much to the fans' approval), Roberts jumped into the ring and took an early lead in the match. Slater managed to throw Jake out of the ring, however, and



Jake Roberts desperately grabs the ropes, trying to avoid a very unpleasant meeting with the ringpost. Roberts would eventually manage to use his DDT and pin the North American champion, but he would not be allowed to leave the arena with the belt.

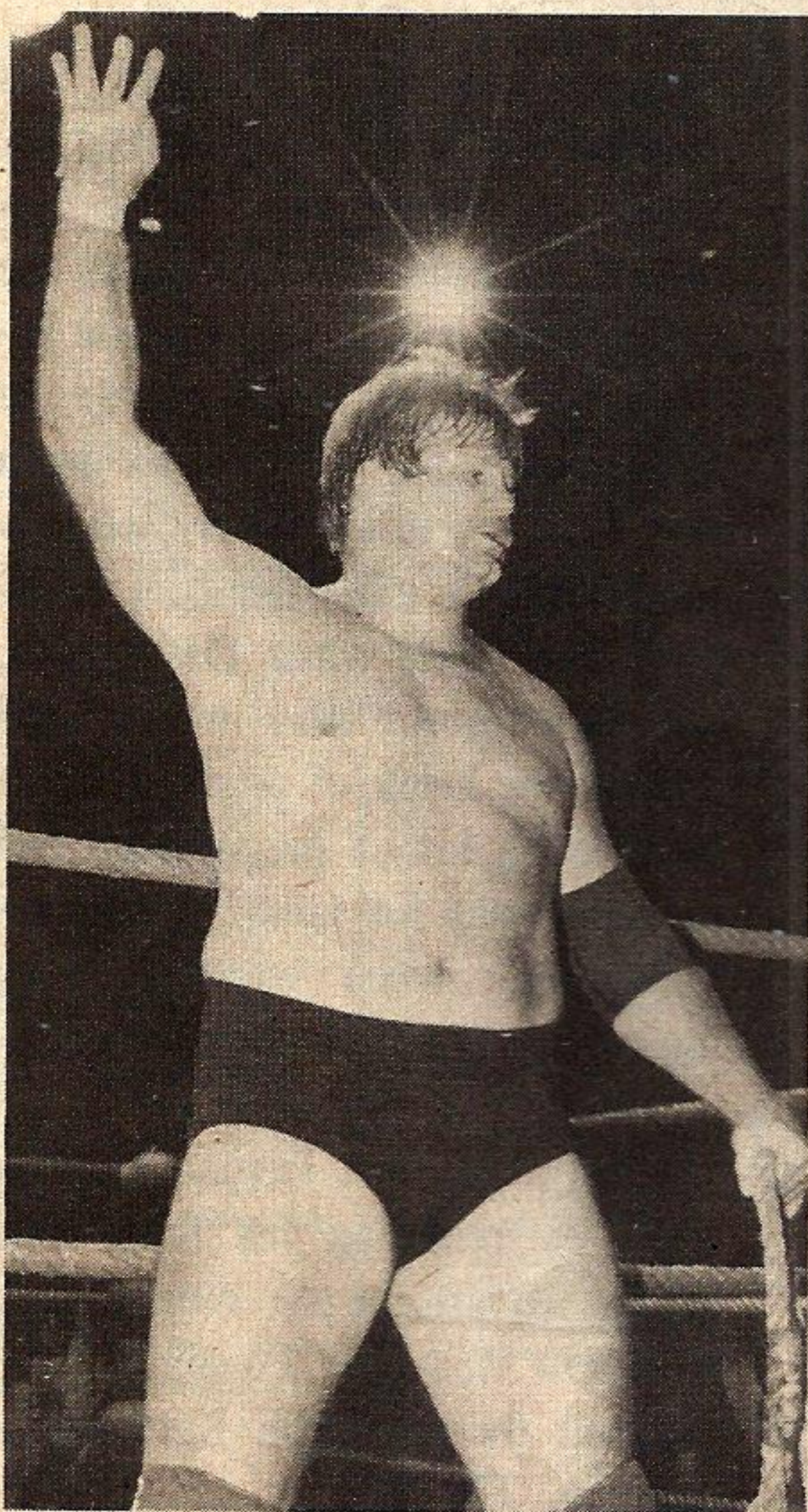
they continued the battle on the concrete floor. Slater butted Jake's head into the steel ringpost, bloodying him.

As fans screamed for the DDT, Slater tangled Roberts on the ropes and proceeded to knock him around the ring. When Slater got Roberts down for a two-count, Jake kicked out and began to strangle Slater with a string.

Dark Journey tried to distract the referee while Jake pinned Slater for a two-count of his own. An enraged Slater threw the referee over the ropes. Roberts managed to DDT Slater for an apparent title victory, but the disqualification against Slater for assaulting the referee took precedence and Dirty Dick was, in effect, rewarded for his action with the return of his belt.

In other bouts: Steve Williams & Ted DiBiase retained their Mid-South tag team title against Dick Murdoch & Masked Superstar ... The Guerreros defeated The Shepherders ... Dave Peterson defeated Shawn O'Reilly ... Koko Ware pinned Rob Ricksteiner ... Tarras Bulba defeated Al Perez.

Las Vegas, NV (Correspondent—Cathy Norton): AWA wrestling returned to the Showboat Sports Pavilion at the Showboat Hotel and Casino in a big way.



Stan Hansen certainly underestimated David Sammartino before their match at the Showboat Sports Pavilion. He won't make that mistake again.

There were a total of eight matches on the card, and they were all taped for broadcast over the ESPN cable sports network.

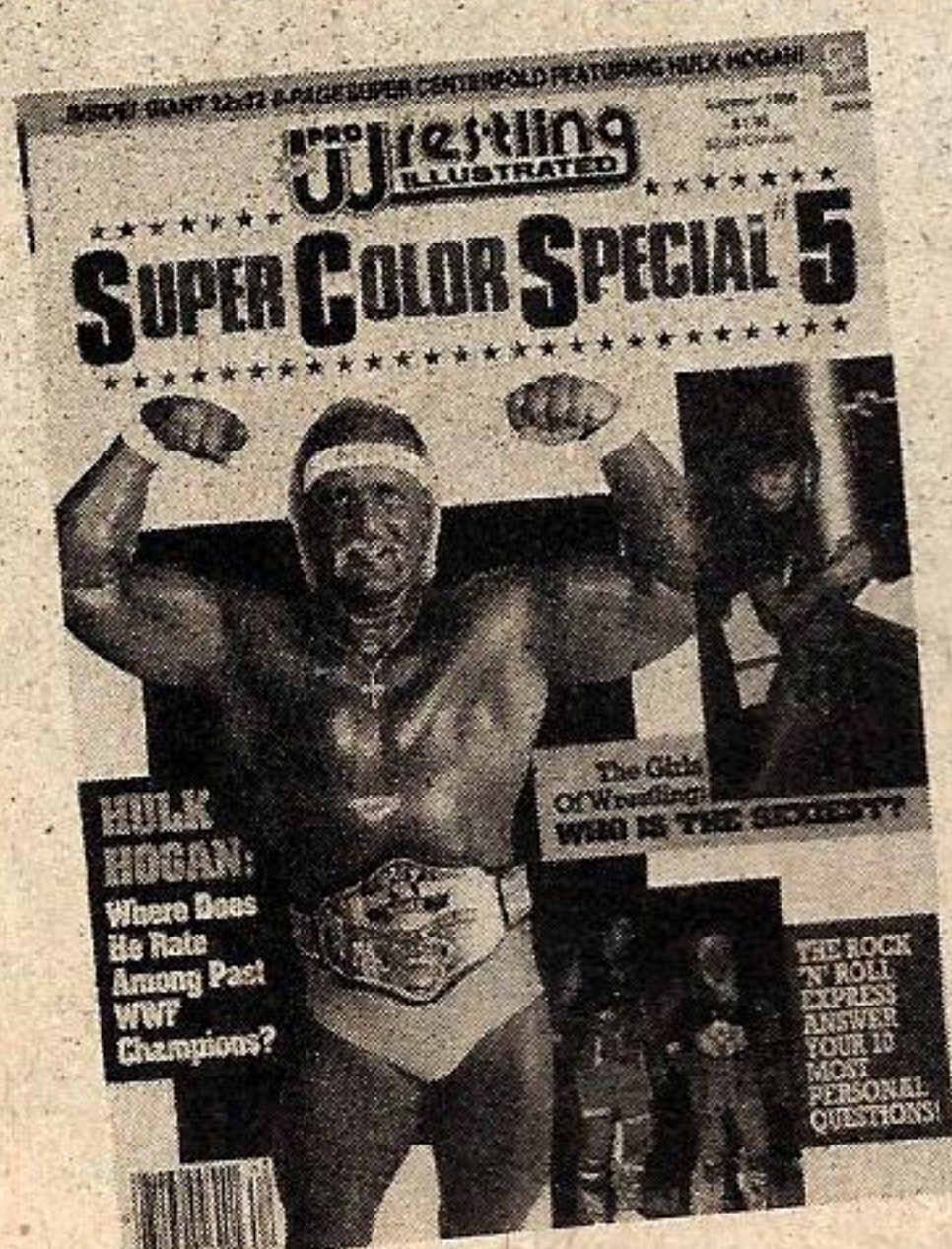
In the main event, AWA World champion Stan "The Man" Hansen defended his title against David Sammartino. The match was wild and uncontrolled from start to finish. It took place not only in the ring, but on the concrete floor, and in the lap of this reporter when Hansen threw Sammartino into some ringside chairs. Although Sammartino showed a great deal of skill and expertise, he was unable to withstand Hansen's violent assault and could not win the belt.

In other bouts: Larry Zbyszko pinned Leon White ... Curt Hennig & Marty Jannetty defeated Boris Zukhov & The Barbarian by disqualification ... Sean Michaels defeated Doug Somers ... Jerry Blackwell beat Boris Zukhov ... Scott Hall won his match against Doug Somers ... The Long Riders scored an easy victory over Tim Patterson & Bun Boy ... Sean Michaels defeated Buddha Khan by pinfall. □

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(Continued from page 12)



would like to ask any of the Von Erichs how they feel about what happened."—Cathy Morrison, Boston

A: Kevin Von Erich answered this question on behalf of Texas' First Family of Wrestling: "Regardless of my personal feeling about the way Gino wrestled, his attitude toward our family, or the way he lived his life, I mourn Gino's death very deeply, and I feel very strongly for his family and friends. I know how bad I felt when David died, and how things were when Mike was on the brink of death. I know there are a lot of people who feel the same way for Gino. It's always unfortunate when wrestling loses one of its brightest stars."

Q: "I want to know if Iceman Parsons plans on renewing his feud with Buddy Roberts in the World Class area now that The Freebirds have returned there."—Phil Kerns, San Antonio, TX

A: "It's already happening, brother," Parsons replied. "Look, my man, I had Roberts put away for good.

The feud between Iceman Parsons and Buddy Roberts has not lost its intensity.

That 'Bird done flew the coop with his tail feathers between his legs. You all remember when Roberts was shaved bald, don't you? Well, the fool didn't learn the first time around, and now he's making trouble for me again. He better watch his booty, because he messes with me too much, he's gonna find himself looking like Kojak faster than he he can say, 'Who loves ya, baby?' And you all can take that one to the bank, brother."

Q: "Does Jim Cornette really want us to believe that his tennis racket isn't loaded? I think he's got solid steel in there. Ask him why he never takes that racket cover off!"—Dexter Morris, Charlotte, NC

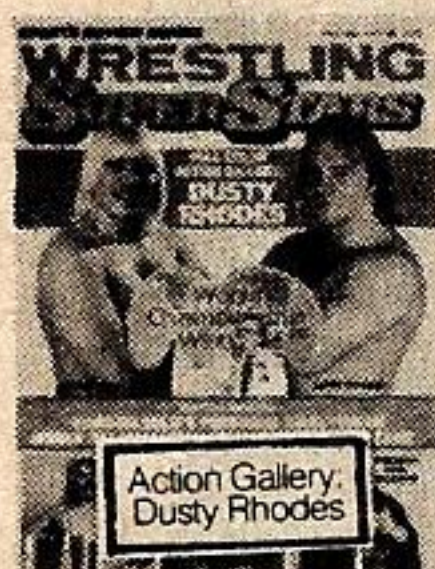
A: Jim Cornette's reply: "Dexter? I haven't heard of anyone named Dexter who wasn't anything more than the biggest nerd in the school. Run along, Dex, go play with your slide rule and juggle a few quadratic equations. I have more important things to think about." □

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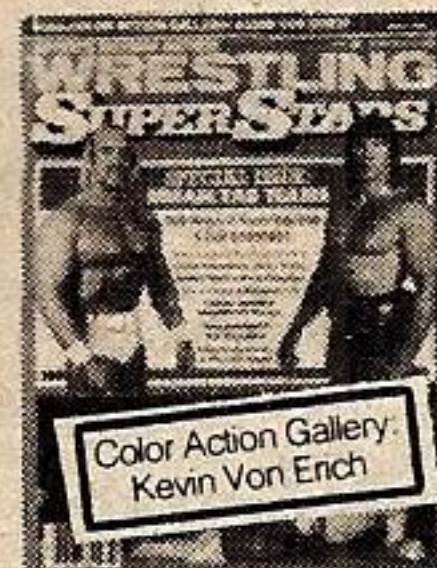
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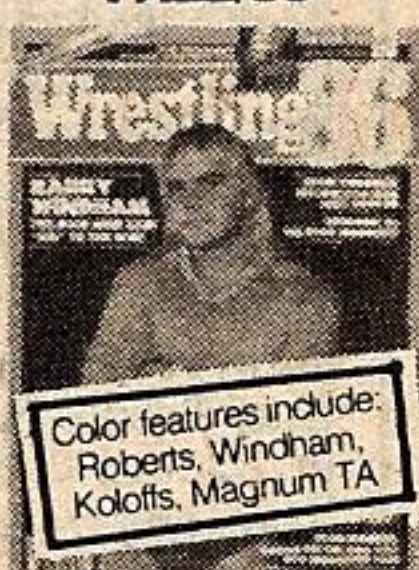
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MAGNUM & KERRY

(Continued from page 35)

Mantell turned and left the podium, leaving a thunder of unanswered questions behind him.

Riding in his car, Kerry Von Erich was turning the dial of his radio looking for a tune to his liking. Through the jumble of rock, Latin, soul, and classical, he heard the words "... old Class Wres ...," and he feverishly tried to fine-tune to that station. When he finally did, he heard a sportscaster breaking the news of the recently ended press conference. Kerry listened in stunned silence.

Von Erich had taken to the highway as a sort of therapy. He feels he does his best thinking while the engine of his Porsche hums to the tune of 55 miles per hour. On this day, under a bright late-winter Texas sun, Kerry was conjuring up images of a future match against Ric Flair. "I know I'll get that slippery toad next time," Von Erich was thinking. In his daydream, Kerry was again holding aloft the NWA belt when he heard the shocking news on his radio. The news was doubly disturbing to Kerry because he believed he had recently discovered the secret to defeat Flair quickly and convincingly. Kerry felt he was only a title match away from regaining the NWA belt he had held briefly in 1984. Frustrated again in his dream to win the NWA title, Von Erich hit the padded dashboard with the palm of his hand.

But as the miles wore on, Kerry's mood brightened. Because he's a member of the World Class roster, Kerry realized his days of chasing Ric Flair were over, and he made peace with that thought. "Ric Flair ... Rick Rude," he said aloud. "Meet the new boss, same as the old boss." Kerry daydreamed again, and once more he saw himself holding up a prestigious title belt. Only this time the words on the belt read "World Class Heavyweight Champion."

Magnum T.A. heard a ringing
(Continued on page 64)

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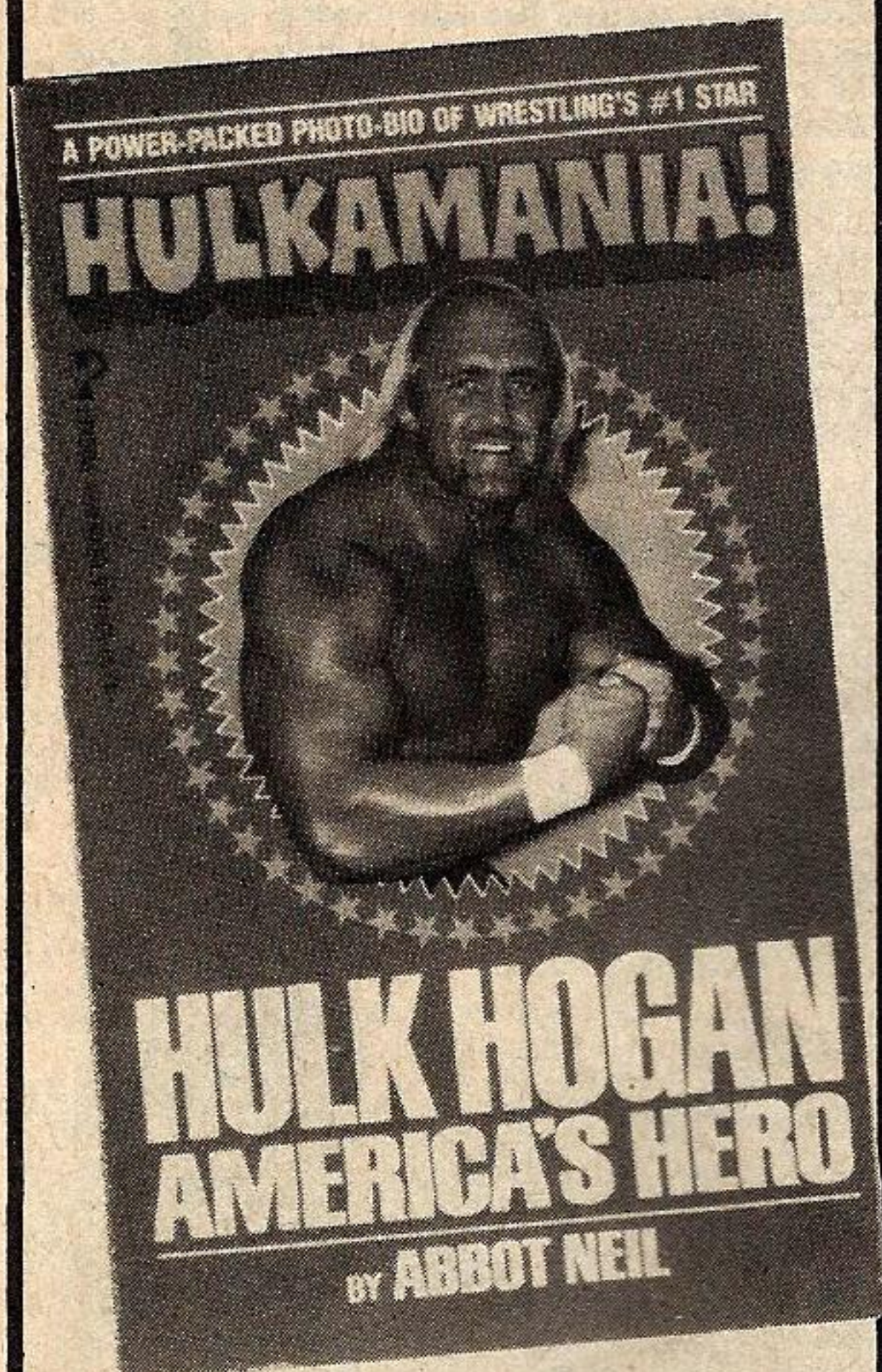
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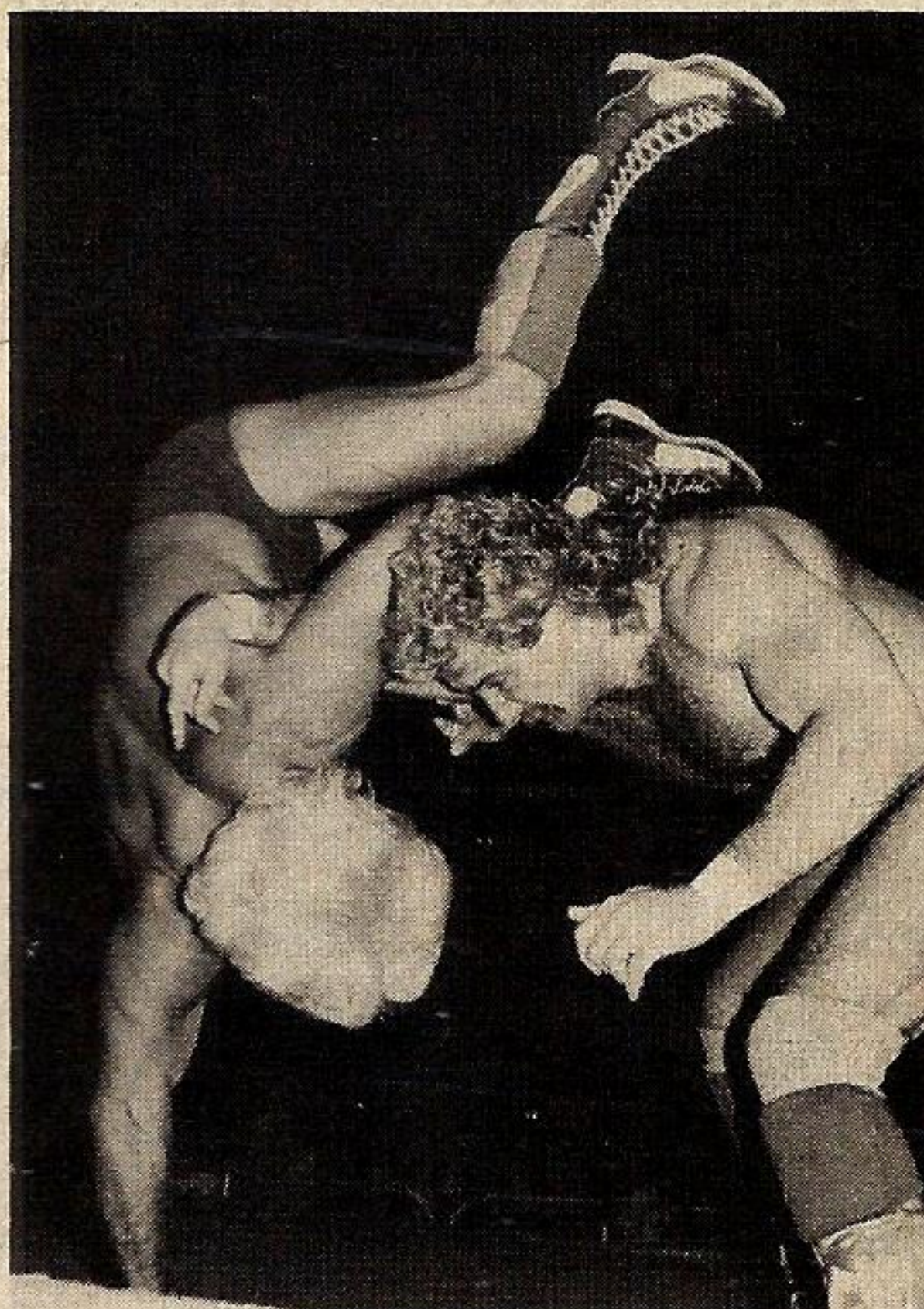
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MAGNUM & KERRY

(Continued from page 62)



Magnum T.A., so close to defeating Flair in so many matches, might have received the edge he needs from Kerry.

sound in his head as he whipped a tired and bloody Ric Flair into the ropes. He caught the NWA champion on the rebound in a perfect belly-to-belly suplex, and the two athletes crashed to the mat. Pressing Flair's shoulders to the canvas, T.A. expected to hear the pleasing sound of the referee's palm slapping the mat three times. Instead, in those three seconds that should have made him champion came a flash of understanding. The ringing sound he had heard only moments earlier was the time-limit bell. Ric Flair had escaped again.

T.A. showered, dressed, and headed for the hotel. As soon as he got in the lobby, the desk clerk handed him a message. *Call K.V.E. immediately.* T.A. took the elevator to his floor and placed a call to his old friend in Dallas. Kerry told him about WCW's decision to break from the NWA, and he suggested that he and T.A. meet in person. Since both men have such heavy schedules, a meeting in Chicago's O'Hare Airport was suggested for the next day. The two men could talk while waiting for plane connections.

The next day, T.A. landed at O'Hare and was surprised to see a group of reporters waiting for him. Somehow, word that he and Kerry

were to meet had gotten out. T.A. refused to answer any questions and was escorted to a private office in the arrivals wing of the airport. There, behind closed doors, T.A. and Kerry spoke for more than two hours. When the two men finally emerged, they agreed to talk to the press.

"Kerry and I have been friends since my days in the World Class area," T.A. said. "We have been discussing the state of wrestling in general, and Ric Flair in particular."

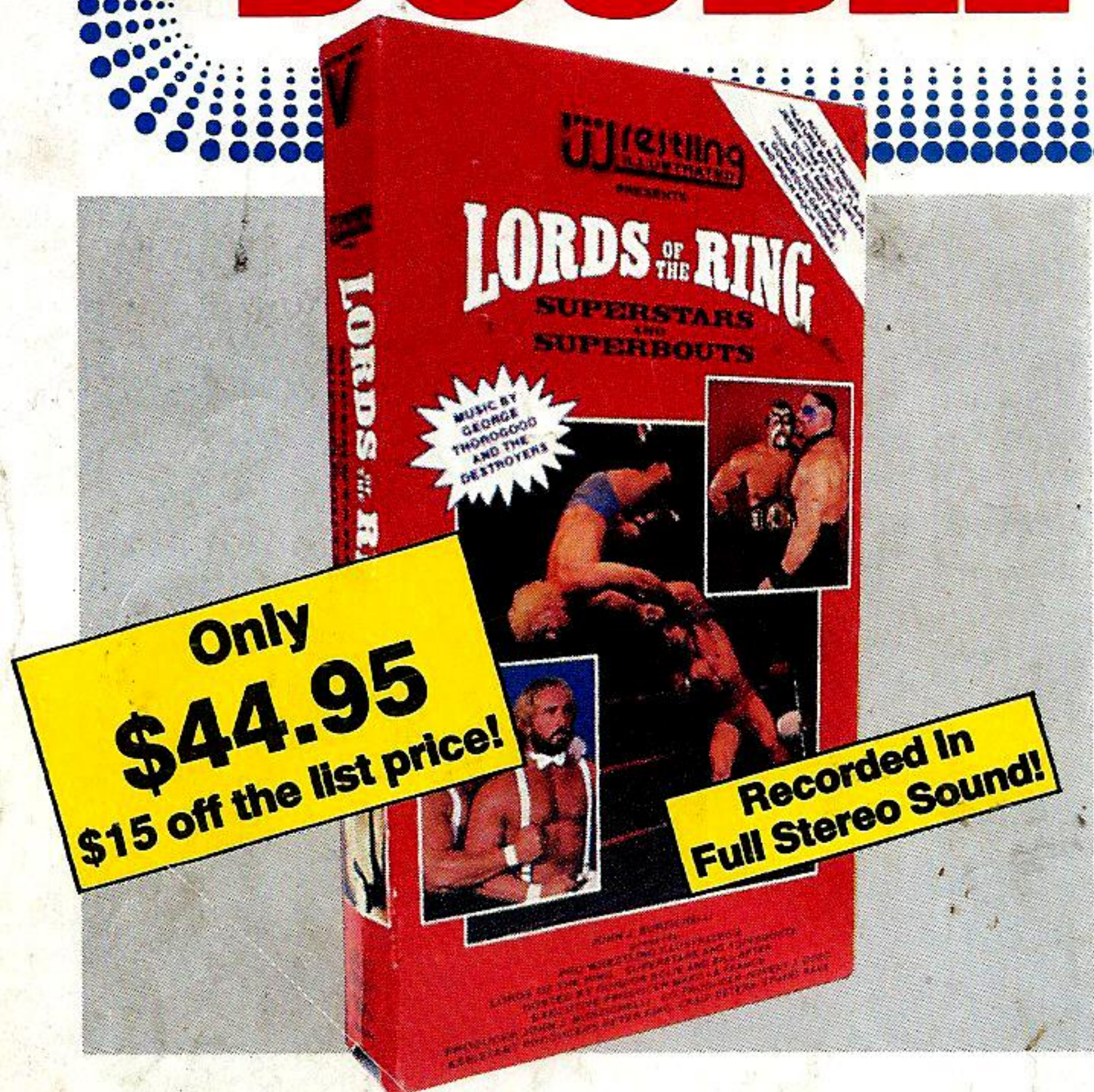
"My goal now," said Von Erich, "is to defeat Rick Rude. But I still have an intense dislike for Mr. Flair that just won't go away. In the past, T.A. and I have been competitors for Flair's title. We've been friends, sure, but we were also like two grizzly bears going after the same wily raccoon. We weren't about to help the other one take our meal away. Now, though, the situation has changed."

"Kerry has very unselfishly given me every piece of information that he, Kevin, Lance, and Mike have learned about Ric Flair," T.A. said. "Some of the stuff I knew already, of course, but there were a few weaknesses about Flair that I wasn't aware of. Kerry feels he knows how to beat Flair, and he doesn't want the information to go to waste. I appreciate his help, and I hope that some day I can return the favor."

When both men were asked to be specific about the information, they laughed. "It would be stupid to tell you what Kerry just told me," said T.A. "You guys would print it, and then Flair would see it. Just be at the matches the next time I wrestle Flair. I can't *tell* you what Kerry told me, but I can sure as hell *show* you! Guys, we got planes to catch. Gotta go."

Kerry and T.A. stood up and shook hands. They walked into the main terminal together, where they would take different planes that would take them to different cities. And, for the first time since both men had become pro wrestlers, they would find themselves chasing different dreams. □

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